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TEN

SERMONS

ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS,

BY THE LATE ELHANAN WINCHESTER,

PREACHER OF THE

UNIVERSAL RESTORATION.

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Nov. 19, 1799.

A

SERMON, &c.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

SOLOMON's SONG, CHAP. V. 10.

My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefeſt among ten thouſand.

THE Devil has had ſo much influence upon the heads of even ſome good men, as to make them ſuppoſe that this very beautiful book of the ſacred ſcriptures is nothing more than a dialogue between Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter, and to perſuade others that this was the firſt intent of Solomon in the writing of it; but that he being an inſpired writer, the book, notwithſtanding the original intention of its author, was typical of Chriſt and his Church. But let good men ſuppoſe what they will, or bad men endeavour by their vain imaginations, ſtep by ſtep, to undermine the authenticity of the holy ſcriptures, this book contains in it certain and indubitable evidence of the divinity of its origin. There are in it ſeveral expreſſions not in the leaſt adapted to create love, and ſeveral remarks that make it certain that it could not have been wrote for Pharaoh's daughter.

Would Pharaoh's daughter have ever ſaid, "Look not "upon me becauſe I am black, becauſe the ſun hath looked "upon me: my mother's children were angry with me, "they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own "vineyard have I not kept." If the brethren of the daughter of a poor Arabian had turned their ſiſter out to keep the

vineyards, and ſhe had been under the neceſſity of obeying their imperious dictates, it is not likely that the daughter of the great King of Egypt, who gave ſeveral cities to Solomon as a portion with her, ſhould be in ſuch a ſituation with her brethren, or that had they been ſo inclined, that Pharaoh would have permitted it.

But of the Church of Chriſt this is true. Her mother's ſons have often been angry with her, they have blackened her character, they have driven her out into the wilderneſs, they have made her appear as an outcaſt of ſociety, a mock, a ridicule, a contempt to mankind.—This is indeed one proof of her being the ſpouſe of Jeſus: like her huſband ſhe bears her croſs, and remembers his words—"Woe be to you when all men ſpeak well "of you:" and this was ſpoken of ſcribes and phariſees, the profeſſing church of that day: and the ſpouſe of Chriſt knows it, ſhe knows that all that will live godly ſhall ſuffer perſecution, and that ſeverely, from friends, from men of the ſame profeſſion of faith, having before them the hopes of glory through the ſame means; this increaſes the pains of it, the ſevereſt wounds are thoſe given by a friend: O, how ſevere are the pangs that ariſe in the wounded boſom of a believer, from the contempt, the ridicule, the reproach of that man who profeſſes to believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt! It almoſt ſtaggers his faith, he trembles for himſelf, and for his perſecutor. But Chriſtians muſt expect it: "their mother's "children will be angry with them." They were with their maſter ſo enraged, as at laſt, under the empty form of law, unlawfully to put him to death. So they likewiſe ſerved the apoſtles; Paul ſuffered many perils from falſe brethren, and ſo have the martyrs, and ſo does the Church of Chriſt now. If they ſuffer not death, as in days paſt, it is becauſe they are reſtrained, not by the ſpirit of perſecution being deſtroyed, but by the ſpirit of the times, which does not permit it to ſhew itſelf in impriſonment, tortures, and death.

But there is one mark evident as the ſun when it ſhines, that this beautiful poem refers to Chriſt and his Church alone: all who know any thing about natural love, know full well that it does not with for competitors; it is ſelfiſh, narrow, confined, and cannot bear, without the greateſt jealouſy, the leaſt degree of any thing like riv[illegible]ſhip; but here the ſpouſe of Chriſt paints in the moſt lively beautiful characters,

characters, the glory of her ſpouſe, and points out to the daughters of Jeruſalem where they may find him Here then is a mark which the wiſdom of God has cauſed to be ſet upon this book, that no profane wit of man may be able, conſiſtent with truth, at any time to turn it into ridicule: for while the love of man and woman is ſelfiſh and confined, full of envy, hatred, jealouſy, and revenge, this book invites all to love the beloved object: "Whither is thy beloved gone, "O thou faireſt among women? Whither is thy beloved "turned aſide? that we may ſeek him with thee," &c. This is indeed the nature of the love of Chriſt, when it is ſhed abroad in the heart by believing: it cauſes the Chriſtian to paint the object of his love in the moſt endearing animating colours; he ſhews how great, how kind, how compaſſionate, how powerful, is the ſon of God: it giveth ſuch a glorious view of his deſire and his ability to help the wants of poor loſt creatures, that all around are ready with the daughters of Jeruſalem to cry out, "Whither is thy beloved "gone?" We long to ſee him, to taſte of his goodneſs, to enjoy his favour, to be animated by his preſence: O, tell us, thou believing ſoul, "whither is thy beloved turned "aſide, that we may ſeek him with thee." Was not this your caſe, O believer, when you firſt found that Chriſt died for you? Did not you love him the chief among ten thouſands? Was he not to your ſoul altogether lovely? Did you not wiſh that all might love him? Was not your heart expanded by this love, wiſhing that all might come and enjoy him as you then did? How then did your language glow with divine fervour, when you ſpake of the dying Redeemer; your whole ſoul as it were breathed in your ſpeech, and every thought appeared as it were alive. The love of Chriſt, therefore, thus ſtands diſtinguiſhed from all carnal love, and by it ſeparates this book from all danger of miſapplication by any holy ſoul; but on the contrary, gives him heavenly language to expreſs the brightneſs of his thoughts of the greatneſs of the love of Chriſt: there not being one paſſage in the whole book but what may fully and properly be applied to Chriſt and his Church.

Having thus diſcovered the glorious ſubject of this poem to be Chriſt, let us now ſpeak of his character. When I read this book I am delighted with it, becauſe it ſets forth in the happieſt form of expreſſion, thy love, O Jeſus, to my ſoul, I ſee thy tenderneſs, and my ſoul runs on the wings of

 faith

faith to meet thee, ſwift as " the chariots of Aminadib." Speak, O believer, can you love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt too much? Can he be too precious unto your ſouls? Can your hearts be too full of a ſenſe of his goodneſs? Or can you tell how much he loved you, when he gave himſelf for you? O, how did he leave the boſom of the Father, and take our nature upon him, becoming liable to its infirmities, ſuffering reproach, contempt, ridicule, poverty, becoming a ſcorn, an outcaſt of ſociety, without ſhelter, without home: how did he weep over thoſe woes ſin had brought upon man, and at laſt die for us, the juſt for the unjuſt, to bring us to God. How great indeed! how vaſt! how unbounded was this love! Surely ſuch love " many waters cannot quench " it, neither can the floods drown it." It riſes ſuperior to pain, ſorrow, anxiety, and death. It burſts the bands of mortality, and triumphs over Hell and the grave.

This is my beloved. The true believing ſoul can ſay of Chriſt, he is my beloved, all my affections are his. Our Lord told the unbelieving Jews, " If God were your father " ye would have loved me, for I proceeded and came forth " from the father." Love is here uſed by him as the touch-ſtone of their religion. Let men boaſt of their faith, and talk of their works, " he that loveth not is not of God, for God " is love." There is no true religion without love being in the inmoſt ſoul, guiding all the affections, making every temper and paſſion of the heart ſubordinate to it. For God is a ſpirit, and muſt be worſhipped in ſpirit and in truth, and he is love. Therefore love is that ſpiritual worſhip which the Father requires: he that loveth fulfilleth the law; without love to God, to Chriſt, to all mankind, the Chriſtian is dead whilſt he liveth; but he that hath this love, hath Chriſt formed within him, and is alive to God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Like Chriſt he is comparatively dead to every thing elſe. All things elſe are counted but as dung and droſs, ſo that he may win Chriſt. Thou profeſſor of Chriſtianity, haſt thou this love for Chriſt? Is it ſuperior both in quantity and quality, to every other temper of thy mind? If not, it cannot be accepted! Theſe are the words of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; of thy redeemer: of him that bought thee with his own precious blood. " He that loveth " father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; " and he that loveth ſon or daughter more than me, is not " worthy of me; and he that taketh not up his croſs and " followeth

" followeth after me, is not worthy of me." He expreſsly ſays, in another place, if the love of our parents, brothers, ſiſters, wife and children, is not hatred in compariſon of the love we have for him we cannot be his diſciples; therefore before our love can be accepted by him, it muſt be ſuper-eminent unto every other inclination, and the Chriſtian can ſay thus, I love Chriſt, for he is worthy to be ſo loved: my beloved is worthy to be loved, " he is white and ruddy, the " chiefeſt among ten thouſands." He is white, pure, holy, harmleſs, undefiled; he never was defiled with an unclean thought, or an unchaſte deſire, no not for a moment. His boſom was like ſnow to fire. If any unholy fire fell upon him, it was immediately quenched by his purity: ſin had no part in him. For though in all things elſe he was like unto man, it was with " ſin only excepted." Chriſt is ſpoken of as being white, pure, holy, as the eternal Father; free from all ſin, in thought, word, or action: as when he was tranſfigured upon the mount, his garments became by the ſplendour of divine glory ſo white, that no fuller upon earth could whiten it. So was his character at all times ſo free from all impurity, that it was not poſſible for all the malice of his enemies to blacken it: many attempted it, but all their ſlanders fell off from him in a moment. He could appeal to his enemies, " which of you convinceth me of ſin?" He could appeal to his accuſers, and by the bold integrity of his confeſſion, force an unjuſt judge to declare, " I find no fault in him."

He is alſo ruddy, glorious, and beautiful, though once marred more than any man, the contempt and ſcorn of the people; yet when he ſhall come again in the glory of his Father, he ſhall then be a perfect ſtandard of perfect beauty, far exceeding our firſt parents when they came forth in all the beauty of paradiſaical innocence from the hands of the great Creator. Paul ſaw him and was ſtricken blind by the ſplendour of his divine glory; and when the holy apoſtle John beheld him, " he fell at his feet as dead." Who can conceive the greatneſs of the glory that could cauſe ſuch an effect. How very beautiful muſt Chriſt be, when all things in nature, beautiful as they appear in their preſent degenerate ſtate, are but ſparks of his beauty by whom they were created. All the glory and beauty we have ever ſeen, are but ſcattered rays of his glory: truly we may ſay of him that he indeed is the chiefeſt among ten thouſands. How very highly

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does David ſpeak of him in the xlvth pſalm, "Thou art "fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy "lips: therefore God hath bleſſed thee for ever. Gird thy "ſword upon thy thigh, O mighty one, with thy glory and "thy majeſty: and in thy majeſty ride proſperouſly, becauſe "of truth, and meekneſs, and righteouſneſs: and thy right "hand ſhall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are "ſharp in the hearts of the King's enemies, whereby the "people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God! is for ever "and ever; the ſceptre of thy kingdom is a right ſceptre; "thou loveſt righteouſneſs and hateſt wickedneſs; therefore "God thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs "above thy fellows." This is a glorious deſcription of the King of Glory. Life, wiſdom, and power are aſcribed to the bleſſed Redeemer. Whatever is excellent in the whole creation he poſſeſſes in his perſon, with a ſomething that they cannot poſſeſs, incommunicable glory; the meekneſs of a Chriſtian is in him united with the Almighty faithfulneſs of a God; the tender feelings of a creature; the unbounded power of a Saviour; the humility of manhood, the infinite wiſdom of deity, all that is amiable, all that is deſirable, all that is glorious, center in him. He is altogether lovely; he is the chiefeſt among ten thouſand. The ſcripture never fails to point out unto us the failings of God's heroes, whether they be in a Moſes, an Aaron, or a David. It is the book of truth and the book of God. It ſtrictly records what has been without any partiality to any man; yet there are ſome characters againſt whom no evil thing is recorded, becauſe no evil was found in them by their enemies. Though the enemies of Daniel perſuaded the Perſian monarch to make a law to catch him that they might put him to death, it was becauſe ſo great was his uprightneſs, that they would not, with all their malice, caſt any other ſtigma upon his character, than that he dared rather to obey God than man No fault is mentioned of the three worthies who had the courage to reſiſt the command of the great King Nebuchadnezzar in worſhipping his golden image, though backed by offers of pomp, wealth, and earthly glory, or in caſe of refuſal, to ſuffer a moſt awful death. Neither was there any fault found in Samuel, the Prophet of the Lord; nor in Caleb and Joſhua, his faithful ſervants. Theſe, and many other characters, the ſacred writings record no fault of. But great and glorious

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as they were, as he that buildeth an houſe is greater than the houſe, ſo Jeſus, the firſt and only begotten of his father in his character uniteth all that was excellent in all their characters, and is higher in excelling than the higheſt; ſurely, then, he is worthy to be loved!

He was likewiſe great in power to do good, he healed the ſick, he gave ſight to the blind, he unſtopped the ears of the deaf, he cauſed the lame to leap like the hart, and ſet free the man whoſe body was enſlaved by wicked demons; he ſpake and the tempeſt hearkened to his word, univerſal nature knew his voice, and by obedience to his will confeſſed his ſovereign power. But great as all theſe things were, ſome of them mankind have performed by his permiſſion, and others have impiouſly pretended to perform; but there was one thing beyond the imitation of man, ſuperior to the boldeſt impiety of wickedneſs ever yet to pretend to, that belonged to his character, in him dwelt the fullneſs of the Godhead bodily: aſtoniſhing thought! Who can fully comprehend it? He had all wiſdom. We know, ſay his Diſciples, that thou knoweſt all things. He ſearcheth the reins and the heart, and trieth out all our ways.

Omnipotence belongeth unto him. The Father hath given all things into his hands. "Thou haſt given him," ſaith he. "power over all fleſh, that he might give eternal life "to as many as thou haſt given him." "For he hath put "all things under his feet. But when he hath put all "things under him, it is manifeſt that he is excepted who "did put all things under him." Here is then omnipotence in the hands of Chriſt to the utmoſt poſſible extent, the eternal Father being alone excepted. Omniſcience likewiſe is, wherefoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there, ſaith he, am I preſent in the midſt of them. If he poſſeſſed not this, what folly would it be to call upon his name? The Saints have it not, therefore prayer to them is uſeleſs; but Jeſus is endowed with omniſcience, he is therefore an object of worſhip; for which reaſon it is ſaid, "Wherefore when he bringeth in his firſt begotten Son into "the world he ſaith, and let all the Angels of God worſhip "him; and this great this glorious Saviour is our beloved."

Conſider likewiſe his love to ſinners; ſurely this, to poor guilty fallen creatures that ſtand in need of a Saviour, would of itſelf alone, be ſufficient to engage our affections. To us, indeed, he is the chiefeſt among ten thouſand, none in heaven

heaven or earth are like him. Who like him that dwelt in uncreated ſplendour in the boſom of the Father, would have laid by his glory, diſrobed himſelf of his Majeſty, and taken upon himſelf our ſin, degraded nature, and after ſuffering all poſſible human evils at laſt to die a painful, ſhameful, accurſed death for ſinners, for his ſinful enemies, his ſinful, ungrateful, unjuſt enemies. Was ever love like this? Human love can go no farther than for a man to lay down his life for his friend; and one poor ſolitary inſtance of this, in the caſe of Damon and Pythias, has appeared, to the aſtoniſhment of mankind. Dionyſius, the tyrant of Syracuſe, had condemned Damon to death, and given him permiſſion to retire to his own country to ſettle his affairs, on condition that he procured a perſon to remain in priſon, under the equal forfeiture of his life, if he did not return by the appointed day. Pythias heard the condition, unſolicited he accepted the offer and Damon was ſet at liberty. The day arrived, Damon had not returned, and Pythias was led forth to execution. Surrounded by the guards, he walked with a ſteady pace, and contented air. The tyrant, upon a moving throne, drawn by ſix milk-white horſes, ſat penſive and attentive to the conduct of the priſoner, who came to the ſcaffold, vaulted lightly upon it, and beholding for ſome time the apparatus of death, he turned with a pleaſing countenance, and addreſſed the aſſembly:

"My prayers are heard. The gods are propitious! You "know, my friends, that the winds have been contrary till "yeſterday. Damon could not come, he could not conquer "impoſſibilities: he will be here to-morrow, and the blood "which is ſhed to-day ſhall have ranſomed the life of my "friend. O, could I eraſe from your boſoms every doubt, "every mean ſuſpicion of the honour of the man for whom "I am about to ſuffer, I ſhould go to my death even as I "would to my bridal! Be it ſufficient, in the mean time, "that my friend will be found noble, that his truth is un-"impeachable, that he will ſpeedily approve it, and that he "is now on his way, hurrying on, accuſing himſelf, the "adverſe elements, and the gods. But I haſte to prevent "his ſpeed. Executioner, to your office!"

As he pronounced the laſt words, a buz began to ariſe among the remoteſt of the people; a diſtant voice was heard: the crowd caught the words, and "Stop, ſtop the execu-"tion," was repeated by the whole aſſembly. A man came

at

at full ſpeed. The throng gave way to his approach. He was mounted on a ſteed covered with foam. In an inſtant he was off his horſe, on the ſcaffold, and had Pythias embraced in his arms. Dionyſius heard, beheld and conſidered all with aſtoniſhment. His heart was touched;—his eyes were opened;—he deſcended from the throne;—he aſcended the ſcaffold.—"Live, live, ye incomparable pair!" he exclaimed, "Ye have borne unqueſtionable teſtimony to the exiſtence of virtue, and that virtue equally evinces the certainty of the exiſtence of a God to reward it. Live happy, live renowned! and, O, form me by your precepts, as ye have invited me by your example, to be worthy of the participation of ſo ſacred a friendſhip.

But Chriſt laid down his life for his cold-hearted enemies; he died, the juſt one for unjuſt wicked men, to bring them to God. The patriot dies fighting for his country,—he lays down on the bed of honour,—he has with him ſpectators of his courage,—and death or victory brings him immortal fame. He knows that he ſhall be honoured by his countrymen, and that his very enemies ſhall admire his courage; not ſo Chriſt: He had not before him any expectation but of malice, outrage and contempt; and nothing but the power of faith, which by giving, as it were, life to the hope ſet before him, could make him endure the horrors of the croſs, and deſpiſe its ſhame, being ſuppoſed to be an impoſtor, and as ſuch treated with the bitterеſt revilings and cruel mockings. It was a great thing in him to ſuffer ſo cruel a death, when, by the leaſt exertion of his power, he might with eaſe have deſtroyed a world in which ſuch cruelties were permitted to be acted, under the ſacred name of Juſtice. We find it very difficult to bear trifles from each other and from mankind, but let us never more dare to complain, let us learn to bear ſufferings from Jeſus. He was led like a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep that is dumb before her ſhearers, ſo opened he not his mouth. With patient dignity let us ſilently imitate our maſter, looking forward to that period when we ſhall ſtand before him as ſovereign of the world, to receive a reward at his hands.

The words of his mouth were ſweet. How ſweet, how eloquently perſuaſive muſt have been the words of that mouth which could diſarm the officers of the furious Phariſees that came againſt him full of fierceneſs and rage; but he ſo charmed them with the ſweetneſs of his converſation that they went

away without touching him, and told their maſters, never man ſpake like this man. It might be indeed metaphorically ſaid of him, that he calmed the tigers, and the lions licked his feet. They not only refuſed to perform the unjuſt orders they had received, but even dared to bear alſo a meaſure of reproach for his ſake, for their maſters ſaid unto them, are ye alſo deceived?

How ſweet are the words of his mouth to a poor heavy laden ſoul, ſinking beneath the conſciouſneſs of paſt tranſgreſſion, and dreading the awful indignation of Jehovah againſt ſin. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you reſt; take my yoke upon you for it is eaſy, and my burthen for it is light." "Be of good cheer," poor trembling ſinner, "thy ſins are forgiven thee." O could I repeat unto you all his words that expreſs the univerſality of God's everlaſting and unchangeable love, I ſhould indeed warm your hearts, and under a ſenſe of the greatneſs of divine benevolence, and the vaſtneſs of a Saviour's love, your ſouls would indeed cry aloud, the words of his mouth are ſweet. We tremble at the wrath of the Almighty from a conſciouſneſs of the depravity of our nature, and our many departures from the light of truth; but now we behold that Jehovah by his conduct has in our hearts exemplified the truth of his word, "A gentle expreſſion turneth away anger, but grievous words ſtir up ſtrife." We were enemies to God by our wicked works, but the Son of God has convinced us that by it we were enemies to ourſelves, that God really hath always loved, and hath now, by the gift of his well-beloved Son, convinced us of it. His goodneſs hath led us to repentance, and being now become reconciled to God, with joy of heart we confeſs that his words are indeed ſweet.

Yea, he is altogether lovely. Where has been the man, but Jeſus, of whom this can truly be ſaid? Wherever there is the ſmalleſt degree of imperfection, that perſon cannot be altogether lovely; for there cannot poſſibly be any thing amiable in imperfection. Every human character is imperfect, but the weakneſs is paſſed by, the error is loſt in the ſuperior excellency of the traits that may belong to the perſon. In all characters but that of Chriſt, we may make a debtor and creditor amount, and ſtrike a ballance; but in him there is no poſſibility of doing it: His character was all perfection: "He was fairer than the ſons of men, grace was poured into his lips." He was no doubt lovely in his perſon;

perſon; even in his human body, there appears to have been ſomething particularly pleaſing; for it is obſerved, that as he grew in ſtature it was likewiſe in favour not only with God but with men. How lovely were his thoughts, they were continually of peace and not of evil; always ſeeking what good he could do. How oppoſite the character of Chriſt to that of Satan, his grand adverſary; the one continually going about to ſee what evil he can do, whilſt it was the buſineſs of our Lord to do good. His actions were always good, becauſe the principle upon which he performed them was good. It was a principle of obedience, "I come" ſaith he, "not to do my own will, but the will of him that ſent me:" He therefore did the works of God. How good is Jehovah, who cauſeth his ſun to riſe and his rains to deſcend upon the wicked as well as the good? How very benevolent is he, whoſe tender mercies are over all his works,—who loveth not the death of a ſinner, but had rather that he would turn from his iniquity and live? The Father and the Son were one,—Chriſt was in all things like him: He teſtified the greatneſs of his origin by the benevolence of his nature. How amiable, how altogether lovely was his conduct! Behold him weeping at the tomb of Lazarus! See him mourning over Jeruſalem, that was about to take away his life! Look after him as he goeth to Calvary! Behold him comforting the mourners! Hark! he prayeth for his enemies! "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

He is indeed altogether lovely. How lovely was he on the morning of reſurrection, comforting the poor mourning penitent Apoſtle, and cloathed in his reſurrection body! How lovely is he to the hopes of the believer, whoſe expectations are confirmed by it, whoſe higheſt ambition is to be like him, and who never thinks of the promiſes made unto him but by faith; he looks back to the glorious deſcription that is given of his bleſſed Lord, and by the view is animated to preſs forward with freſh ardor in his courſe,—he runs the race with renewed vigour, and by faith realizes future glory.

How lovely is he in his aſcenſion! Our friend, our brother, poſſeſſed once of like infirmities with ourſelves, and therefore capable of feeling for all our wants, and pains, and cares,—he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and ſtands before the throne of his father for ever, to make interceſſion for us. Oh, how lovely, how altogether lovely is he!

ſitting upon the throne of his glory, and protecting every believing ſoul that caſts his care upon him.

If to us he is now ſo lovely, only by the exerciſe of our faith, how much more lovely will he be when we ſhall behold him as he is? To you that believe, he is indeed precious now; but then ſhall you ſee him at the right hand of God, and myriads of angels hearing his voice and proud to obey his commands. All heaven ſhall reſound with his praiſe, and glad earth from her poles re-echo back the ſound! All nations ſhall then worſhip at his feet, and obey, with holy joy, his will; then ſhall the earth bring forth her increaſe, and God, even our own God, ſhall bleſs us, and all the ends of the earth ſhall praiſe him; then indeed ſhall all know him to be altogether lovely, perfect in beauty, ſupremely excellent in wiſdom, power, and glory.

O my ſoul, do thou now love this Saviour! thou never canſt love him enough! thou canſt not love him as he hath loved thee. Who could ever have thought that ſuch perfection could ever have ſtooped to ſo cruel a death, to redeem thee from the puniſhment due to thy crimes. May the thoughts of ſuch tranſcendent love melt my heart to tears, and cauſe my whole ſoul to overflow with gratitude at the conſideration of ſuch unmerited tenderneſs, ſuch enduring love. So great, ſo ardent, ſo pure is his love, that it might melt an heart of adamant. May it have upon our ſouls its full effect, that we may believe in him, love him, obey him, and ſo prepare to meet him in his kingdom, and be for ever with him.

CONCLUSION OF THE FIRST SERMON.

SERMON II.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

ISAIAH XXI. 11 and 12.

He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman ſaid, the morning cometh, and alſo the night: If ye will enquire, enquire ye: Return, come.

IF politicians can aſſert that the liberty of the preſs is for the happineſs of mankind, and ought not to be reſtrained; I can with equal veracity affirm that the liberty of the pulpit is for the happineſs of ſociety, and ought not, for the welfare of mankind, to be ever curbed by any power upon earth, if the characters of thoſe who fill the miniſterial office are agreeable to the word of divine truth. They ought to be unreſtrained in their ſpeech, that they may be able to ſpeak with the more boldneſs, ſpeaking in the name of Jehovah the Lord of heaven and earth. In every country where this is not the caſe, the legiſlators are guilty of the blood of their fellow-creatures, Ezek. xxxiii. 2. and 6. "If the people "of the land take a man of their coaſts, and ſet him for their "watchman: If when he ſeeth the ſword come upon the "land, he blow the trumpet and warn the people; then "whoſoever heareth the ſound of the trumpet, and taketh "not warning; if the ſword come and take him away, his "blood ſhall be upon his own head. He heard the ſound of "the

" the trumpet, and took not warning, his blood ſhall be upon
" him: But he that taketh warning ſhall deliver his ſoul.
" But if the watchman ſee the ſword come, and blow not the
" trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the ſword
" come, and take any perſon from among them, he is taken
" away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the
" the watchman's hand." A watchman ought therefore to have free liberty of ſpeech, when he addreſſeth a people in the name of Jehovah; and it is incumbent upon him to uſe aright, without deſiring or particularly attempting to pleaſe any body of people, or ſociety, or ſect, or party whatſoever: neither ought any ſervant of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to reſpect any man on account of his wealth, title, or power. Though Herod, the mighty tyrant of Judah, heard John the Baptiſt gladly, and did many things on account of what he ſaid to him, yet how boldly did John reprove him on account of his wickedneſs in taking his brother Philip's wife. John muſt have known that his reproving him would occaſion him to loſe his life, yet the ſolemn office of a ſervant of the moſt high God, would not admit his parleying with fleſh and blood; his duty muſt be performed, the conſequences muſt be left with his God. Neither ought any earthly affection to permit them ever to hide the truth of God; for the man who loveth father or mother, wife or children more than Chriſt, is not worthy of him. I ſeldom can read without aſtoniſhment of the boldneſs of the ancient Prophets in reproving the abſolute monarchs of the earth. Witneſs the man of God who warned the wicked king Jeroboam when he erected an altar to his idols, that he might prevent the Iſraelites from going up to worſhip Jehovah at Jeruſalem. Behold Elijah ſtanding before the wicked Ahab; or the poor deſpiſed Micaiah making the ſame monarch tremble leſt he ſhould hear the truth from him. With what almoſt ſupernatural courage does Jeremiah ſpeak to Zedekiah, and ſhew him the awful threatnings of the God of Iſrael that were ready to fall upon him if he perſiſted in his diſobedience to the warning voice. Sometimes indeed their boldneſs coſt them their lives, but in general they lived to ſee the fulfilment of their prophecies. A man ſpeaking therefore from the pulpit in the name of God, ought to ſpeak without reſtraint.

Let us examine, firſt, the words of the prophecy as they ſtand—the oracle concerning Dumah or Idumea.

The Prophet had been ſpeaking of the nations that ſurrounded

rounded Judea, and foretelling their different fates, and taking no notice of any other nations in the world, but of ſuch as were contiguous to Judea, or ſuch as the Iſraelites had to do with. Edom had been from the going forth of the children of Iſrael from the land of Egypt, one of the moſt bitter enemies the Jewiſh people had to do with: At their coming up from their hard ſlavery in Egypt, inſtead of comforting them, they met them in warlike array, and refuſed them a paſſage through their borders to the land of Canaan, which they well knew had been promiſed to their fathers by the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob. Notwithſtanding the very moving meſſage of Moſes, they refuſed them a paſſage although they offered to pay for the very water that they or their cattle might drink; and as then, ſo to the end of their being a nation, they rejoiced at every evil that befel them, and continually ſought opportunities to do them a diſſervice. On this wicked nation God had threatened deſtruction, whilſt on the Jewiſh nation he only threatened ſevere chaſtiſement, but had promiſed that they ſhould exiſt as a nation while the ſun and moon endured. Edom as a nation has long ſince been annihilated, whilſt on the contrary the prophecies have been ſtrictly fulfilled in the preſervation of the Jewiſh people, nor ſhall all the combined powers of hell and earth be ever able to deſtroy them. This accounts for the ambiguous manner of this prophecy.—A meſſenger, a believing Edomite, ſeems to be repreſented as addreſſing the Prophet, and ſays unto him, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" as much as if he had ſaid, I know the wickedneſs of my countrymen in paſt ages, and I know their preſent iniquity; Jehovah has repeatedly threatened them with deſtruction. You, a Prophet, ſtand like a watchman, overlooking the enemies of the people of God: you make known to the children of men that which is coming on, that thoſe who fear God may be prepared to eſcape the impending vengeance. Say, O Prophet! has the Lord God of Iſrael delivered you any meſſage concerning my country? Is the meaſure of its iniquities yet filled up? May I venture to ſtay in the land of my forefathers, or muſt I flee for my life? The Prophet ſeems to anſwer, I have no good news for your people;—the threatenings of the Moſt High muſt be accompliſhed; as a nation God hath ſworn he will deſtroy them; the morning of their proſperity is paſſed, and the night of deſtruction haſteneth on: I am

not

not now commiſſioned to fix the time ; go your way therefore in peace, and if you ſtill ſhould wiſh to know, come and enquire at ſome future opportunity.

In all probability, the enquiring Edomite, diſmiſſed by the Prophet in this gentle manner, returned home to his country, and died in peace ; but the nation purſued its wicked courſe, and after being frequently overrun by the ſurrounding nations, was at laſt, in the time of the Maccabees, entirely deſtroyed as a nation, thoſe who eſcaped the ſword being incorporated with the Jewiſh people ; and as not one Chriſtian periſhed in the ſiege of Jeruſalem, I ſhould ſuppoſe not one Edomite eſcaped.

When this queſtion was aſked, many things that had been fotetold, then remained to be accompliſhed, which have now long ſince been fulfilled. Full ſeventeen centuries have paſſed away ſince vengeance has been poured out upon that nation. A long, dark, gloomy night this has been to Edom, and to many other nations, who were the enemies of the children of Iſrael, according to the word of the Lord by the prophet Jeremiah xlvi. 28. " I will make a full end of all " the nations whither I have driven thee ; but I will not " make a full end of thee, but correct thee in meaſure ; yet " I will not leave thee wholly unpuniſhed." The exiſtence therefore of the Jewiſh people, amidſt the deſolation of all the ſurrounding nations, is a wonderful inſtance of divine providence fulfilling prophecy. They, like the Arabians, have, according to the declarations of God, had the hand of all mankind againſt them ; yet, in the midſt of all, they have been preſerved, monuments of juſt puniſhment, divine faithfulneſs and mercy ; whilſt all their perſecuting enemies, however mighty they may have been, have one after another been cut off, and nothing is now left but the hiſtoric page to record that they have ever exiſted ; whilſt their deſpiſed, hated, oppreſſed, feeble ſlaves ſtill live, and ſhall ſoon be exalted from the dunghill of contempt and corruption, to principles of virtue, to the knowledge of Chriſt crucified, to a throne of dominion,—to be princes and kings throughout the earth. The intimations of God ought therefore not to be ſlighted : Whatſoever he pronounces muſt take place : His purpoſes ſhall ſtand, he will do all his pleaſure.

Son of man ! ſaid the Lord unto Ezekiel, I have made thee a watchman unto the houſe of Iſrael : therefore, thou ſhalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

When

When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. And as from the hand of Ezekiel God would require the blood of those who might perish, if he did not warn them according to the word of God, so will God likewise require at the hand of every minister the blood of those who may perish through his unfaithfulness, if he warn not his flock when he seeth the sword is coming; and this is not only applicable to an inspired messenger of the most high God, but likewise to that ministering servant who shall be appointed by the people. But if he blow the trumpet and warn the people, he shall deliver his soul. Happy indeed is that minister of the gospel who can say with Paul, I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have never omitted to declare, according to my knowledge, the whole counsel of God.

Perhaps some of you may say to me, Watchman what of the night? Can you tell us what is coming on? Do you pass your time in visiting, trifling, finding fault, slander, idleness, in visitings, and labours of little or no consequence? Or do you study the times and the word of God? What can you say, O watchmen! to direct us how to act? I know that some of you will be ready to put such questions to me; they are solemn ones; may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ write them upon my heart. I regard not being self-condemned, let all that is wrong in me perish; daily would I be grateful for personal enemies; the falsehoods they assert teach me patience, and shall soon be forgot; but the severe truths they tell, teach me to know myself; they lay open my faults, and put it in my power to correct my ways.

Paul, writing to young Timothy, exhorts him "to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine; meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profit may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself and unto thy doctrine, continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." He likewise exhorts him "to study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of divine truth." It surely is as great a disgrace to a minister of the gospel not to be as ready to give an answer concerning any part of the word of God, as it would be for a counsellor at the bar not to be able to answer any question at law that his client might put to him. The least that is

incumbent upon him, is to have a general knowledge of every ſubject in the ſcriptures; he is continually to labour in the vineyard of his maſter, and by night and day to pray to God that he would crown with ſucceſs the word he has to deliver. And like Paul, the aged ſervant of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, continually to ſay unto others, "pray for us." Theſe are the means by which a watchman ought to gain inſtruction; every Chriſtian might in this way daily grow in wiſdom: but a watchman is dedicated to the ſervice of God, and in his time and all his employments ought to be ſeparated from idleneſs and ſin, that by purity, by diligence, by faith unfeigned, he may with all wiſdom divide the word of divine truth ſo as to be able to give unto every man that portion he needeth, approving himſelf unto the conſciences of all men that he is a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed.

But ſay you, "Watchman what of the night?" Yes, it is night, a dark, gloomy night indeed! In the night counterfeits paſs for current coin, the eye cannot ſearch through the falſe garb that covers them, but with the moſt careful inveſtigation. Is it not thus with doctrines? How very many counterfeits are there that paſs for truth amongſt even profeſſors? Falſehoods are received from father to ſon, and ſpread abroad through the world for the doctrines of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. O that he, the Sun of righteouſneſs, would ariſe, and with the bright beams of the millenium morn chace away the clouds and darkneſs of this night of error and ſuperſtition! then would be ſeen the full glories of divine truth, and errors would diſappear like the ſhades of darkneſs before the morning light; men would then ſee the beauty of the doctrines of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and it would be their delight to follow his teaching voice.

I am certain it is the night of Chriſtianity, becauſe Chriſtians, like men travelling in the night, are apt to miſtake each other, owing to the obſcurity of the night; they know not each other; they miſtake one another's characters and principles, and falſehood is taken for truth and truth for falſehood. The man who makes bad coin is guilty, but that man is not guilty who in a miſtake takes it for good; he may loſe by his careleſſneſs or misfortune, but is to be pitied and not condemned. It is this miſtaking of each other's principles and character which leads them into diſputes and wars; they fight under the banners of party, and often through miſtake unite the moſt diſcordant ſentiments together to fight againſt the truth. The hoſt of Chriſtians united together

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againſt the univerſality and reſtoring power of all redeeming love, is not much diſſimilar to the vaſt, unconnected, jarring army which Xerxes of old brought againſt little Greece. But I truſt the believers in the univerſal love of God will oppoſe them, not with the weapons of carnal warfare, but with the word and ſpirit of truth. Then let profeſſing Chriſtians through miſtake fight, rage, and accuſe; the Chriſtian by his peace and humble walk with God will be up with them, for all their wrath will be caſt away; and when the day begins to dawn their adverſaries will ſee their folly, will condemn themſelves, and be aſhamed before them. Then ſhall the watchmen in Iſrael ſee eye to eye, and an evident diſtinction will be viſible between him who ſerveth God and him who ſerveth him not.

In the night ravenous beaſts prowl about after their prey; bears, lions and tigers then go forth in ſearch of the unguarded flock, or to ſeek an opportunity to evade the vigilance of the ſhepherd. In like manner, evil angels now prowl about in ſearch of their unguarded prey. Theſe are difficult to be encountered; millions of creatures inviſible to man, infernal ſpirits. Epheſ. vi. 12. "For we wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities, againſt powers, againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in the high places." Theſe have no good deſigns towards mankind; theſe delight to tempt the children of God to ſin, that they may accuſe them before the throne of the Moſt High, as they did Job of old; but the night ſhall ſoon cloſe, and they ſhall retire to their dens; for when the day ſpring from on high ſhall ariſe on the millenial morn, Satan and his hoſt ſhall be caſt into the bottomleſs pit, and be ſhut up, and ſealed for a thouſand years, that he deceive the nations no more for a thouſand years.

Evil men are likewiſe compared to ravenous beaſts; they compaſs me about like dogs, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, I know it is night by ſeeing theſe roam at large. Even in London, the moſt civilized city in the world, when I hear men blaſpheme the Deity, and ſpeak evil of the Moſt High, or profanely uſe his name, imprecating curſes on themſelves or others, it ſurely is night; was it day, the mouths of all would be full of bleſſings: but ſin ſtalks boldly abroad, ſcarcely any daring to condemn her. If it was day the whole body of unjuſt men, whether thieves or extortioners, or thoſe who, while they elude the eye of man by the outward appearance of virtue, but are ſeen by the penetrating eye of Jehovah to be

unjuſt and defiled, defrauding men by their weights and meaſures, by their deceit, cunning and fraud, of the profits of their labour, would be reformed; they would be confounded and aſhamed of their iniquity, and would learn to labour with their own hands, that they might become the benefactors of ſociety, a bleſſing to mankind.

Was it day, there would be none to rob man of what is more valuable than his labour, his ſoul; not only by falſe doctrines, but by inflaming the paſſions and perverting them from their proper end. Man was created for the glory of his God, that by regulating the animated works of creation, he might create around him univerſal harmony; but, alas! how many are there who, inſtead of ſeeing it their glory to aſſiſt their fellow creatures in the paths of virtue, are never pleaſed but when they can, by inflaming their paſſions, bias them to all evil! O! it is night, dark night; a night awful with the ſhades of vice which obſcure virtue. Rectitude of principle and of life are, indeed, but too little known; were it day, ſin would ſhew its horrid form, iniquity would be aſhamed of the uglineſs of its features, and would flee from the haunts of men; ſhould it exiſt, it would be only in ſecret, leaſt, ſhould it be known, it ſhould be held up to the reproach and ſcorn of mankind. Then would truth and righteouſneſs flouriſh; peace and joy would abound, and earth would bring forth her increaſe, and God, the tender parent of all, would pour down his bleſſings upon mankind

Was it day, men would ſee their true intereſts; then there would not be heard the roaring of cannon, nor the ſound of the trumpet to prepare the army to battle. Once ſince the formation of man there was a glimpſe of light, a faint reſemblance of the brightneſs of the millenial day, under Solomon the mighty, the wealthy, the wiſe; and, during the time he obeyed God, the good. Man then lived happy, and praiſed God, the author of every good and perfect gift; riches flowed in upon them ſo abundantly, that through the plenty of gold, ſilver was a metal but lightly eſteemed Men lived then in ſafety, every one ſitting under his own vine and fig-tree, enjoying in peaceful content the kind bounties of the God of nature. Before that happy reign, and ever ſince frequent wars have impoveriſhed the nations, and kept this earth comparatively, a deſert uncultivated wilderneſs. Was the money that has been ſpent in wars ſince the time of our Saviour only, to have been ſpent in cultivating

vating the arts of peace, the whole world would have been a garden, and a hundred times its preſent inhabitants would have been able to have enjoyed not only the conveniencies but likewiſe the luxuries of life; but war has deſolated the world, and made the earth barren. But they that ſhall live when this night of deſolation ſhall cloſe, ſhall ſee the Prince of Peace, who ſhall diſpel the clouds of ſtrife and contention, and cauſe war to be no more; then every man ſhall indeed enjoy the bounties of Jehovah, none daring to make him afraid.

But what time of the night is it? the fourth and laſt watch: ſoon ſhall it cloſe; and he who ſhall remain, if amongſt the ſaints of God, ſhall hail with holy rapture the coming of the Meſſiah in the clouds of heaven in power and great glory. Then indeed ſhall the day break, and the ſun ſhall ariſe in all the fulneſs of divine luſtre, whilſt the clouds of ignorance, ſuperſtition, falſehood and vice ſhall vaniſh at the ſplendor of his appearance. The appointed time for God to favour Sion is not far off; good news to the nations of the earth, Chriſt will ſoon appear to put an end to the night of vice and oppreſſion, and on you that fear his name the Sun of righteouſneſs will ariſe with healing in his wings. I hail the day! and through faith with joy behold the wonderful things God will do for the children of men when Jeſus ſhall ſit upon the throne of dominion, and rule with the ſceptre of righteouſneſs all the nations of the earth. Then ſhall the vallies be exalted, and the high places be brought low, the crooked ſhall be made ſtrait, and the rough places ſmooth, and all nations ſhall behold the glory of God.

The means by which theſe changes ſhall be brought about are earthquakes; they are the inſtruments God will make uſe of to level the mountains and exalt the plains; they ſhall turn the ſtreams of living waters into the deſart and make the wilderneſs to look gay, and bloom with the roſe, the box, and the myrtle; they ſhall ſcatter plenty through the ſandy deſarts of Arabia, and cover the uncultivated wilds thereof with the lovely charms of vegetation. In thoſe days ſhall men learn wiſdom from the Son of God; they ſhall be well acquainted with nature, and ſhall adore the name, of Jehovah, and magnify him for all his works.

How very different is this from the preſent ſtate of things! yet glorious and beautiful as the world will then be, the brightneſs of the millenial day muſt cloſe in a ſhort but awfully

awfully dark night to ſome, but the brighteſt of all days to others, to ſuch as have paſſed to the regions of glory; they ſhall ſee no more night; but thoſe whom Satan has deceived ſhall, in the height of their folly, go up againſt the Lord and ſurround the camp of the ſaints. Then ſhall indeed the laſt and moſt dreadful of all nights come upon them, when the judgment ſhall be ſet, and the books ſhall be opened, and angels and men be judged by Chriſt and his ſaints. Then ſhall the thunders roar and the lightnings flaſh, whilſt the earthquakes ſhake and burſt the ſolid ground, and from all parts volcanos ſhall pour forth their melted lava and deluge the globe with flaming deſolation; then ſhall the earth, and all that is therein, be burnt up; the lovely farm, the well-built city, the houſe of prayer, yea even the temple of Jehovah ſhall yield unto the fury of the all-devouring flame. Then ſhall the wicked bewail their tranſgreſſions, when all this world ſhall be turned into a lake of fire and brimſtone. At that awful moment, of what uſe will be the riches of this world, its pomp, its power, and all its carnal pleaſures, when all Nature ſhall be melted into one fiery ruin, and the mighty ocean ſhall itſelf be turned into flames? Awful night indeed! night illuminated only by the gloomy flames of hell!

How dark and gloomy muſt be the ideas of thoſe who ſuppoſe this night muſt be perpetual, that all its gloomy horrors ſhall never end; ideas ſufficient to ſtrike a terror through the ſoul, and vail our brighteſt hopes, and caſt a cloud over the moſt exalted of our expectations. But a day ſhall break upon the eyes of mankind brighter than as yet ever has been, a day that never more ſhall end. I ſaw, ſays the Revelator, a "new heaven and a new earth; for the firſt heaven and the firſt earth were paſſed away, and there was no more ſea." It muſt therefore be of the ſame ſubſtance as this our earth, but of a different form, not having on it any ſea; a glorious place it will be, the habitation of righteouſneſs; "for the tabernacle of God ſhall be with men, and he will dwell with them, and they ſhall be his people, and God himſelf ſhall be with them and be their God." "And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain, for the former things are paſſed away; and he that ſat upon the throne ſaid, behold, I make all things new."

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Is not this doctrine ſtamped with wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, and agreeable to the benevolent command to pray for all men without wrath or doubting? He that has given the command will fulfil its prayer, and Chriſt ſhall ſubdue all things unto himſelf, and then reſign his mediatorial kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. And when he has thus become to his creatures, night ſhall for ever ceaſe, and there ſhall be light without darkneſs and day without night. O, then, cry unto God and give no reſt day or night until he has eſtabliſhed Sion, and made her a glory and honour throughout the whole earth.

END OF THE SECOND SERMON.

SERMON

SERMON III.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

DANIEL VII. 9 and 10.

I beheld till the thrones were caſt down, and the Ancient of Days did ſit, whoſe garment was white as ſnow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery ſtream iſſued, and came forth from before him; thouſand thouſands miniſtred unto him, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtood before him: the judgment was ſet and the books were opened.

THE prophecies of the Prophet Daniel are ſhort, but they are very important, for they contain the outlines of moſt of the events that have as yet happened, or that ſhall happen, from the time that he delivered them until the ſecond coming of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when his prophecy ceaſes. So very particular has Daniel been in ſome parts of his prophecy, that ſome have aſſerted that it was written after the events had taken place; but however individuals, who love not the truth, or who, being too idle to examine whether theſe things written therein be ſo or not, may have endeavoured to invalidate theſe prophecies; yet we, who believe in the word of Revelation, are convinced that they muſt be truth, becauſe we know that in this prophecy all that Daniel foretold is not yet accompliſhed, but is now going on, as we

we may daily behold, if we are not wilfully blind to the accompliſhment of prophecy, and ſhall continue ſo to do, till the whole is fulfilled. This book contains only twelve chapters, yet the learned Biſhop Newton declares that he had been obliged to ſtudy ſeveral hiſtories to explain a ſmall part of it, ſo full, yet ſo clear, and at the ſame time ſo conciſe, is the revelation of the things that were coming to paſs that was given to Daniel.

This prophecy appears to have been given unto Daniel in a viſion of the night, in which the dream of the prophet, under the direction of the ſpirit of God, made known thoſe things unto him which he was about to perform; and the holy man, taught by the word of God, knew it to be prophetical, and recorded it for the inſtruction of believers in after ages. "In the firſt year of Belſhazzar, King of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and viſions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream and told the ſum of the matters. Daniel ſpake and ſaid, I ſaw in my viſion by night, and behold the four winds of the heavens ſtrove upon the great ſea, and four beaſts came up from the ſea, divers one from another. The firſt was like a lion, and had eagles wings; and I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to ſtand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it." The deſcription of theſe beaſts are ſo very appoſite to the empires they were to repreſent, that it is no very difficult taſk to apply them. "The firſt was like a lion." The Babylonian empire, which if not formed by Nebuchadnezzar, was ſo much increaſed under his reign, that it was like a new empire, of prodigious extent, added to the old one: it was ſtrong, exceeding powerful; like a lion overcoming all the other empires with which it contended; mighty as the lion in the day of battle, and ſwift as the eagle in the rapidity of its conqueſts. But the wings thereof were plucked, when Nebuchadnezzar, the great and mighty Monarch of Babylon, aſcribed the glory due to the King of kings unto himſelf: when he forgot that which Daniel had before told him, that Jehovah, "the Moſt High, ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomſoever he will, and ſetteth up over it the baſeſt of men." When forgetful of his dependence upon this overruling God, Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed, in the pride of his vain glorious heart, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the houſe of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour

of my Majeſty?" Then were his wings plucked, his dignity was taken away, his power vaniſhed like the miſty vapour before the ſolar ray, when there fell a voice from heaven ſaying, " O Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is ſpoken, the kingdom is departed from thee, and they ſhall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling ſhall be with the beaſts of the field; they ſhall make thee to eat graſs like oxen, and ſeven times ſhall paſs over thee, until thou knoweſt that the Moſt High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomſoever he will. The ſame hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar, and he was driven from men, and did eat graſs as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles feathers, and his nails like birds claws." Before this he had been like a ferocious beaſt, delighting in carnage and death; but now, when recovered from this humiliating ſtate, how altered! a man's heart was given unto him; he had ſuffered, and he now ceaſed from ſin. Love to God guided his ways; and as it particularly manifeſts, or at leaſt ought to manifeſt the character of the man in contradiction to that of the beaſt, he with his lips glorified Jehovah, and with his tongue made confeſſion of his name. How changed was the great and mighty tyrant Nebuchadnezzar! He who had proclaimed, that whoſo fell not down at his command and worſhipped his golden image, ſhould be caſt into the midſt of a burning fiery furnace: Behold him now, the meek, the humble man: at the end of the days allotted for his ſuffering, hear him record in all the dignity of royal language, and yet with the piety of a ſervant of the living God, " I, Nebuchadnezzar, lift up mine eyes unto heaven and my underſtanding returned unto me, and I bleſſed the Moſt High, and I praiſed and honoured him that liveth for ever, whoſe dominion is an everlaſting domininon, and his kingdom is from generation to generation, and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him what doſt thou? at the ſame time my reaſon returned unto me, and, for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightneſs returned unto me, and my counſellors and my Lords ſought unto me, and I was eſtabliſhed in my kingdom, and excellent Majeſty was added unto me." Wonderful change indeed! ſurpriſing alteration! No longer the ſelf-willed tyrant of mankind, proud, haughty, and overbearing, ſcattering nations and

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overturning of kingdoms. No longer boasting of his power, but ascribing unto Jehovah the glory due unto his name. Now, said he, Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth and his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

And this sacred truth, not only this haughty Monarch, but all the vain glorious sons of pride shall, like him, confess, "the Kings of the earth that are upon the earth, and the host of the high ones that are on high." Every tyrant who rules over the children of men for his own glory, and only intending his own individual advantage, whether he be Lord over a family or the Monarch of nations, he shall with Satan, the head of the aerial principalities and powers, "be shut up in the prison, but after many days they shall be visited." "At the end of the days" of their judgment, a heart of flesh shall be given unto them; their reason shall return; their honour, and their brightness, and excellent Majesty shall be added unto them; and they shall praise, and extol, and honour the King of Heaven: they shall own all his works to be truth, and his ways judgment; and shall rejoice in the glorious efficacy of that power which they now know is able to abase those that walk in pride.

"And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it; and they said thus unto it, arise, devour much flesh." This was the Persian empire, which, in extent of dominion, was much greater than the Babylonish monarchy which had preceded it. It was like a bear, blood-thirsty and cruel; of which history gives very many horrible instances. It raised itself up on one side, or into one dominion, by Cyrus, at the head of his Persians, who, at the conquest of Babylon, was a subject to the King of the Medes, and general of his army; but afterwards, upon his death, became Sovereign, and raised the Persians above the Medes, and denominated his prodigious extent of dominion by the name of the kingdom of Persia. "It had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it; and they said thus unto it, "Arise, devour much flesh." Sir Isaac Newton, and Bishop Chandler, with great probability, explain these three ribs, as being the three kingdoms of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, which were conquered by the Medes and Persians; and, like ribs, served to strengthen that vast empire. They were likewise in the mouth of the

 bear,

bear, between its teeth, being very much oppreſſed by the Perſians.

And they ſaid unto it, "Ariſe, and devour much fleſh." All hiſtorians who have deſcribed the Perſian monarchy, ſpeak of it as greedy of blood, delighting in cruelty, exerciſing, without the form of law, the power of life and death over their ſubjects; pulling off the ſkin of men while alive; and for the individual offence of one man deſtroying a whole neighbourhood. This dominion was the moſt cruel of any ever exerciſed; the reading only of their puniſhments ſtrike the ſoul with horror.

"After this I beheld, and lo! another like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl, the leaſt had alſo four heads; and dominion was given to it." This beaſt repreſented the Grecian empire, which was firſt formed by Alexander, ſurnamed the Great, as the leopard is ſmall compared with the lion and many other of the ſavage race; yet he is remarked for the audacity of his courage, which often leads him to contend with animals vaſtly his ſuperior in ſtrength. So Alexander, though inferior to numbers in ſtature and ſtrength, at the head of only about thirty thouſand Greeks, ruſhed upon, and overcame the Perſian monarch, at the head of hundreds of thouſands of his braveſt troops. This beaſt had upon the back of it "four wings of a fowl," denoting the impetuoſity of his flight, in twelve years ſubjugating to himſelf great part of Aſia, part of Europe, and part of Africa. "The beaſt had alſo four heads," repreſenting the four Captains of Alexander's army, who ſhared his extenſive dominions among them; "and dominion was given to it." Well might the Prophet obſerve, "the Moſt High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomſoever he will." It is God alone is the firſt cauſe of all ſucceſs; it is true, that he maketh uſe of means in general; but how very ſeldom is it that human foreſight would think the means adequate to the end. What man, who had never witneſſed the progreſs of vegetation, could ſuppoſe the mighty oak, whoſe branches ſpread wide over the plain, could ever have ſprung from the contemptible acorn? Or what politician is there, that would not have condemned the ſcheme of Alexander, as the extreme of raſheſt madneſs, in attempting, with a few thouſand Macedonians, to overthrow the wide-extended Perſian monarchy, full of troops, troops which only waited the nod of their ſovereign, that they might march onward to conqueſt, or to death? But it was

not

not of man to gain dominion, but of God, to give it according to his pleaſure: as Lord of the Univerſe he has a right to diſpoſe of the government thereof; and he doth diſpoſe of them, in judgment, or mercy, as to his infinite wiſdom ſeems beſt, none daring to ſay unto them, What doeſt thou?

"After this I ſaw in the night viſions, and beheld a fourth beaſt, dreadful and terrible, ſtrong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth: it devoured, and brake in pieces, and ſtamped the reſidue with the feet of it; and it was divers from all the beaſts that were before it, and it had ten horns." This beaſt repreſented the Roman Empire, which was, indeed, "dreadful and terrible;" no kingdom was before, or has been ſince, ſo exceedingly ſtrong, or whoſe threats were ſo much dreaded by every other ſtate. The name of a Roman made the nations to tremble. We may obſerve the terror it ſtruck amongſt the nations, from what is recorded of Paul, the priſoner, bound, and about to be ſcourged, he cries out, "Is it lawful for you to ſcourge a man that is a *Roman*, uncondemned?" The centurion, terrified at the action he was about to have performed, flew with anxiety to his Commander, crying, "Take heed what thou doeſt, for this man is a Roman!" Wherever the Romans came, they with the edge of the ſword devoured the nations, removing their youth, the ſtrength of the nations, into their armies, and ſending them to fight their battles at the fartheſt part of their dominions; they likewiſe brake in pieces all the ancient forms of government, and by the vaſt extent of their dominion, might be almoſt called the maſters of the world. "And it was divers from all the beaſts that were before it;" divers in extent of dominion, in form of government, and in its political policy as well as duration.

"And it had ten horns," which, as explained by the angel at the 24th verſe, are "ten kings that ſhall riſe," or, as the phraſe in Scripture language implies, ten kingdoms; of which Machiavel has given us the names, 1. The Oſtragoths in Mæſia, 2. The Viſigoths in Parmonia, 3. The Sueves and Alans in Gaſcoigne and Spain, 4. The Vandals in Africa, 5. The Franks in France, 6. The Burgundians in Burgundy, 7. The Heruli and Turingi in Italy, 8. The Saxons and Angles in Britain, 9. The Herns in Hungary, 10. The Lombards, at firſt upon the Danube, afterwards in Italy.

"I conſidered the horns, and behold there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the

the firſt horns pluckt up by the roots." The learned Biſhop Newton ſuppoſes theſe to be the exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of Lombardy, and the ſtate of Rome (for further particulars, ſee his very excellent Diſſertations on the Prophecies). "And behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man," denoting his cunning and foreſight, and continual vigilance to promote his own intereſt; "and a mouth ſpeaking great things," explained afterwards by the angel, "he ſhall ſpeak great words againſt the the Moſt High." And what power has, under the pretence of religion, ſpoken ſo much againſt the truths which infinite wiſdom has cauſed to be recorded for our inſtruction. In ages paſt he has aſſumed the title of God, God's vicegerent upon earth. He has taken upon him, under this name, to overturn empires, dethrone kings, and trample upon the necks of Emperors. He has ſet nations in confuſion, and by the dint of ſuperſtition, through the power of his interdict, cauſed the dead of the nations to lie unburied, who have dared to refuſe to pay obedience to his will.

"I beheld till the thrones were caſt down." Nothing can ſhew the wonderful patience of the Deity, more than his long forbearance with this fourth monarchy, and its ten deſcendants, through long ſcenes of violence, iniquity and perſecution, from its firſt riſe, and under all its variety of forms of Government, to the preſent times. Leaſt Chriſtians overwhelmed by their ſufferings, tired out by the long continued perſecutions of Heathen and Antichriſtian Rome, with the doctrines of Chriſt obſcured by unreaſonable ſuperſtitions, and intereſted devices of mankind, ſhould be attempted to give up their faith, and ſtop ſhort in the purſuit of that Crown which they were called to ſtrive after: Jehovah before hand, ſhewed himſelf the Governor of the univerſe; foretelling thoſe things that were coming on for many ages. He declared, that this little horn, "ſhould wear out the ſaints of the moſt high." Whoſoever has read the perſecutions of the papal powers in France, in Germany, in Moravia, as well as in this country; cannot but ſee, how the power of Antichriſt has worn out the ſaints of the moſt high. Millions have been put to death, by every ſpecies of torture, independent of ſtill greater numbers who had been caſt out to want, wandering about as the outcaſt of ſociety, of whom the world was not worthy. When we conſider theſe things, it is not to be wondered at, that God has taken up ſo large a portion of the Scriptures, in foretelling the deſtruction of this power.

"I beheld,"

"I beheld," says Daniel, "till the thrones were cast down." The ten thrones into which the kingdom of the fourth beast was divided; I beheld, I looked forward and saw the downfall of the Roman Empire, and beyond it; even to the hurling down the ten thrones, or kingdoms which had been erected upon the ruins of that Empire; I beheld them cast down; their dominion destroyed, that union of church and state, which had made the name of Christianity, governed them by principles contrary to the spirit of Christianity; by worldly motives, of wrath, of pride, of malice, of pomp, of selfish carnality and worldly minded craft; instead of meekness, gentleness, and love; using the persuasive arguments of the sword, and legal penalties; instead of the persuasive eloquence of a holy life and conversation; of sacred truth, and the demonstrative power of the spirit of God. I beheld them, says Daniel, all cast down; the whole Antichristian system destroyed, trampled under foot, the vengeance they had exercised upon the saints of the Most High came home to themselves; and they, being unsupported by the spirit that was in Christ, were swept away by overwhelming destruction. The angel says to John, in the Revelations, speaking of this period, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto Heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her, even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double, &c. &c. Rejoice over her, thou Heaven, and ye holy Apostles, and Prophets, for God hath avenged you on her." Yes! we ought to rejoice over the fall of Anti-christ; they who have slain the Saints of God, God will revenge their cause, and cut their persecutors off from the earth, he doth avenge common murder. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." How much more will God avenge himself upon them who have dared to destroy his people? What had before been shewed to Nebuchadnezzar in the visions of the night, under the form an image, is in this chapter exhibited to Daniel, under the forms of four savage beasts, describing the nature of those great monarchies, which were to arise from the time of Daniel, and to continue till the second coming of Christ; and were till then to be the persecutors of the Church of God, whether Jewish or Gentile.

After this follows the sublime and majestic description of Jehovah,

Jehovah, as given in our text. "The ancient of days did ſit." Not our bleſſed Lord, but the Eternal Father; the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. For it is ſaid ver. 13. "I ſaw in the night viſions, and behold one like the Son of Man came in the clouds of Heaven; and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him." They would not have brought Chriſt near to himſelf; there could not be any greater than Chriſt to whom Chriſt could be brought, to receive dominion; it muſt therefore have been the immortal God, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

God had long ſince ſpoken by the Prophet, ſaying, Jer. xii. 7. "I have forſaken mine houſe, I have left mine heritage, I have given the dearly beloved of my ſoul into the hands of her enemies. Judgment having been executed by him upon his houſe, the Prophet here repreſents him as coming back with mercies to his people; and ſitting upon the throne of judgment, to execute vengeance upon their enemies. How awful were the judgments they had executed upon the Saints of the Moſt High! Rev. xiii. 17. "No man might buy or ſell, ſave he that had the mark, or the name of the beaſt, or the number of his name." Under the Antichriſtian power this was literally fulfilled.

"The ancient of days." The eternal Godhead is deſcribed by this appellation; he who was before all days, time itſelf having ſprang forth from his eternal exiſtence; he is the God of all ages, ruling with uncontrouled ſway, all times and periods; and therefore is juſtly called the King and God of all the ages. He is the ſelf-exiſtent, the firſt of all beings. He ſat upon his throne, and his "garment was white as ſnow." David, ſpeaking concerning the Deity, ſaith, Pſalm civ. 2. "Who covereſt thyſelf with light as with a garment." When our bleſſed Saviour was transfigured upon Mount Tabor, his garment, through the brightneſs of the light of the glory of God, became white as ſnow, ſo as no fuller upon earth could whiten it. "And the hair of his head like the pure wool," denoting its purity, its brightneſs, and its perfection. "His throne was like the fiery flame," ſhewing the greatneſs of his wrath againſt the tranſgreſſions of mankind. "Our God is a conſuming fire" againſt ſin; who then can approach the fiery flame? Who can dwell amidſt the overflowings of his fury, when he ſhall ariſe to take vengeance upon the ungodly, and to cut off tranſgreſſors from the earth? "His wheels as burning fire," ſublime, awful deſcription of the

ſwiftneſs

ſwiftneſs of his power, when he ſhall come to puniſh tranſgreſſion. "A fiery ſtream iſſued and came forth before him," ready to deſtroy his enemies. How ſoon at his word were the powers of nature unchained, and the ſtreams of his fire, in overwhelming torrents, poured forth upon Sodom and Gomorrah? And how ſoon, at his command, ſhall the inundating fiery torrent turn the mountains, hills, vallies, and ſeas, into one vaſt burning lake? At his word, in a moment, fire cometh forth to devour his enemies, as he did Dathan and Abiram of old; or, as when it came down at the requeſt of the prophet, and deſtroyed the captains and their fifties Fire, in the Scriptures is repreſented as one of the dreadful inſtruments to execute the judgments of God. God himſelf is compared unto fire, and we know as little about the nature of fire as we do about the nature of God the firſt cauſe of its exiſtence. It is in fact one of the grandeſt ſecrets in nature. God, the immortal Father, is in Scripture called by the name of fire." "Our God is a conſuming fire." The Son of God is called "the light of the world;" and the ſpirit of God is compared unto wind: "The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: ſo is every one that is born of the ſpirit." The fire will not burn without the air, and without fire there cannot be light; they are all diſtinct from each other; the imagination of man may diſtinguiſh them, but his utmoſt art cannot ſeparate them.

How awfully grand is the attendance of Jehovah in the courts of Heaven! Millions of intelligent, angelic beings continually miniſtring unto him; a thouſand thouſand ſtood waiting upon him, whilſt ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtood before him. I do not think theſe numbers are given as being exact, but that, on the contrary, they repreſent the immenſe multitude of the attendants upon Jehovah as being innumerable. John the Revelator ſaw in like manner the throne of God, and ſays that the number of them who attended before him, "was ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſand of thouſands, ſaying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing." The number of God's ſervants in the univerſe are not a few; if we could ſee aright, we ſhould ſee their number far greater than we can now conceive; the numbers of the creatures of God are perhaps as innumerable as the drops of water in the ocean; his power is infinite, and the number of beings he

has created, are known only to himſelf. And though ſo immenſe in multitude, he knows the number of the hairs upon the heads of each of them; his knowledge extends to all their concerns, nothing is ſo vaſt as to be above his care, nor ſo minute as to be beneath his notice. When we contemplate the inviſible world, it yields to the Chriſtian one continued ſtream of holy joy, he feels delight ariſing from the thought that the number of pure and happy beings that love and obey his God by far exceed the multitudes of thoſe that are ignorant of him, or in rebellion againſt him. I cannot but think that moral evil never reached any part of the creation, but that ſmall part where we dwell. This earth and its airy atmoſphere are the regions to which the hoſt of fallen angels and men are confined. Theſe are the regions of darkneſs, over which Satan ruleth in the hearts of the children of diſobedience. When Satan and his hoſt firſt ſinned, this was the Tartarus to which they were confined in unknown chains of darkneſs; and when this world was created, and man, the appointed Lord of it had rebelled, power was again given to Satan over all confined to this lower world. I think this, becauſe Chriſt could never die but once, and he died upon this our earth. Upon the ſuppoſition that all the moral evil that had crept into the creation was confined to this world, it was wiſe, it was kind in God, to ſend his only begotten Son into this world to die, that by his death he might reſtore the whole creation to its original perfection. But if evil exiſted in any other part of creation, there alſo Chriſt muſt have died, or the love of God could not have been made known unto them as it has been made known unto us; and the love of God, therefore, would evidently appear unequal, by not going forth equally in tender mercies unto all his works: therefore, as God ſent his Son here to die, to me it is evident, that here was the only place of moral evil; and here ſhall it be confined till all are reſtored to the image of God, their maker; then may the creature be truſted any and every where; but rebels and traitors are not to be truſted out of their priſon bounds. Holy angels may be permitted for wiſe purpoſes to come here, but impure beings, like men and devils, cannot go to them, becauſe God will have moral evil confined to its preſent bounds, until it is totally eradicated: thoſe who have ſtood virtuous under temptation may ſafely be permitted to viſit the abodes of vice; and ſee the horrid effects of it, and contraſt it with that happineſs which themſelves experience from their own ſeparation from

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all evil, ſo that the curſe of ſin our God will finally turn into a bleſſing; a bleſſing unto them who learn from the ſad experience of others, and a bleſſing unto them who, having ſuffered, have ceaſed from ſin, and now profit by their own paſt experience.

The angels are ſwifter than light: it is computed that the ſun is about 90 or 100 millions of miles diſtance from this our earth; we know how long the beams of light are coming from that far diſtant orb to this our lower world, but an angel travels far quicker.

> With wond'rous ſpeed the ſolar beams, like thought,
> He ſwift outflies.

The moment a command is given from the throne of Jehovah, his ſwift-winged meſſenger is on this our earth to execute it: how often has a righteous man in danger called upon God, and found that in a moment he has ſent his angel to deliver him. When we conſider the almoſt innumerable dangers with which the unprotected infant is ſurrounded, we cannot poſſibly account for ſo many growing up to years of maturity, but for the interference of thoſe heavenly meſſengers, who, as our bleſſed Lord ſaith, always beholding the face of his heavenly father, are in the moment of danger ſent by him for their deliverance. We find, indeed, in the 10th chap. of Daniel, that there was an interval of three weeks between the prayer of Daniel and the anſwer being given to that prayer; but we are likewiſe informed, that from the firſt day that Daniel chaſtened himſelf before his God, and ſet his heart upon the underſtanding his promiſes, that his word was heard, and an angel ſent in anſwer to his prayer; but the evil angel, who had the ear of the King of Perſia, withſtood him for twenty-one days: this, indeed, is a curious anecdote, illuſtrating the conduct of Providence in the government of man by the inſtrumentality of inviſible agency. How ſwift and powerful are the enemies of mankind. In one night an angel ſlew one hundred and eighty thouſand men; on another memorable occaſion, in one night all the firſt-born of the whole nation of Egypt were deſtroyed. If the creatures of God, the miniſtering ſervants that execute his will, are ſo mighty, how wonderful in power muſt he be who formed them? Tremble before the great and terrible Jehovah, the God of the whole earth! Tremble before him, ye ſons of men, reverence his name, nor dare to diſobey his commands.

But the angels of God are the guardian ſpirits of mankind; our Lord ſpeaks of the guardian angels of infants; the maid ſervant, in the Acts of the Apoſtles, thought ſhe had ſeen the angel of Peter; Paul ſays, "Are not they all miniſtering ſpirits ſent forth to miniſter unto thoſe who are the heirs of ſalvation?" Jews and Gentiles had the ſame idea of them; and ſhall we, who call ourſelves Chriſtians, boldly diſcard ſuch traditional evidence, when ſupported by the authority of the Word of Truth?

There are ſome who have formed the ſtrange idea, that all the angels of God were at one time men; but this is an impoſſibility, for all the human beings that have ever been born into this our world would not amount even to the number of thoſe angels who ſtand before the throne of God. Compare the Pſalms, Iſaiah, Daniel, and the Revelations, with the glorious ſight which Jacob ſaw when he called the place Mahanaim, the hoſt, from the number of the angels that he beheld; and likewiſe Bethel, the houſe of God, from the glorious angelic attendants of the immortal Jehovah, who, obedient to his voice, aſcended and deſcended, uniting earth to the manſions of Heaven. Whenever we wander from Scripture, we may imagine any thing; but whilſt we endeavour to guide even our thoughts by it, though through human weakneſs we may err, never can we ſtray far from the regions of truth; from Scripture it is evident the angels are a ſuperior order of beings, poſſeſſed of vaſt power, and knowledge, and love; and yet ſo humble are they, as to be happy in being appointed by God to miniſter unto mankind; and, more particularly, to attend upon thoſe, who by faith have become the heirs of ſalvation.

"The judgment was ſet;" not that laſt judgment mentioned in the Revelations, when, "the ſea ſhall give up the dead which are in it, and death and hell ſhall deliver up the dead which are in them; and they ſhall be judged, every man according to his works." Judgment doth not take place until after the millenial reign of Chriſt, and the ſecond reſurrection; but the judgment that Daniel ſpeaks of is that which taketh place after the thrones are caſt down, and our bleſſed Lord ſhall appear the ſecond time, when he ſhall come in the glory of his Father and his holy angels, without ſin, unto ſalvation: for Daniel ſays, "I ſaw in the night viſions, and behold! one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of Heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him

him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; that all people, and nations, and languages ſhould ſerve him: his dominion is an everlaſting dominion, which ſhall not paſs away, and his kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroyed." It is therefore evident, that this judgment taketh place at the ſecond coming of Chriſt, prior to the millenial reign; for the kingdom of Chriſt upon earth, is contraſted with the other great monarchies that had preceded; they were to have "their dominions taken away," but his dominion was not to paſs away; from various cauſes their kingdoms were brought to an end, but the kingdom of Chriſt was to be that kingdom which was to ſwallow up every other kingdom, and was not to be deſtroyed by old age, or ſurrounding enemies. On the contrary, it was to laſt through the millenial age. and when that was cloſed, it was ſtill to go on ſubduing all its enemies, until Chriſt, having ſubjugated every enemy to his government, deſtroyed even a deſire to rebel, conferred peace, joy, and righteouſneſs, upon all intelligent creatures, it ſhould, in the full zenith of its power, in the meridian ſplendour of its glory, be reſigned into the hands of the immortal God, and paſs away, not by deſtruction but into increaſed glory, into never-ending felicity. Thus we find the circumſtances, the time, and the place, are different in this judgment from that mentioned in the Revelations. That this judgment was ſet, or appointed, to give the Son of God dominion over the earth, when he ſhall come to reward all his ſervants according to their works; and give rewards unto all that fear his name, both great and ſmall.

"And the books were opened;" the books of God's remembrance, wherein is recorded the upright conduct of his ſaints; Malachi iii. 16. "A book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name: and they ſhall be mine. ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will ſpare them, as a man ſpareth his own ſon that ſerveth him." The conduct of the ſaint of God may be forgotten by themſelves, but it is never forgotten by God; no doubt, the virtuous conduct of Mordecai was forgotten by himſelf; contented with having done his duty, he had no thoughts of reward, but a book of remembrance was kept before the King, and upon its being read, it was found recorded that which he had done; and the conſequence was, that his enemy, the man who ſought his life, and the deſtruction of his whole nation, was appointed like a menial ſervant to array him

him with regal pomp, and walk, proclaiming before him, "Thus ſhall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour." So ſhall it be in that day, the book of remembrance ſhall be opened, and even the gift of a cup of cold water to a diſciple of Chriſt, becauſe of his being a diſciple, ſhall be mentioned to their praiſe; then ſhall royal robes be given unto them; they ſhall be conſidered as kings and prieſts unto God: then ſhall their enemies ſee, and be aſtoniſhed, and with holy reverence proclaim before them; thus ſhall it be done unto him whom King Jeſus delighteth to honour; no more ſhall ſtones and reproach be caſt at them, but the nations ſhall ſhout before them, Hoſannah to him that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Then ſhall no good works be forgotten, the ſorrows, the reproaches they have borne, and all their labours of love, ſhall be brought to remembrance; our God will then open his book, and every work of obedience ſhall be brought to light: well pleaſed at the recollection of them, the guardian angels of the ſaints ſhall ſay, For this, and that, and the other acts of obedience, no honour has been done unto them; now ſhall they be honoured for their good confeſſion, before men and angels, according to the promiſes made unto them by him who is the true and faithful. He will prove to them the awful truth of that ſaying, "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, ſaith the Lord." Yes, Jeſus the Mediator ſhall come as Judge, and ſhall not keep ſilence; he will cauſe the books of remembrance to be opened before his friends and enemies; then ſhall the good deeds of the one be abundantly rewarded, and all the evil deeds, even to the hard ſayings of the other, ſhall be brought againſt them.

Conſider the majeſty of God; what an awful ſubject is this? What are the monarchs of the earth compared with him? He treads upon princes like worms, and the nations of the earth are but like graſshoppers before him. Baxter very juſtly obſerves, that monarchs are but as the great worms of the earth, and their ſubjects the little ones, before God. When, indeed, we think aright of the majeſty of God, and our own littleneſs, we muſt be humbled at the thought; we muſt reverence, we muſt obey him. Shall not God employ our thoughts? What ſubject ſo worthy of them as he, our Creator, our Preſerver, our Reſtorer? What ſubject ſo grand as the majeſty of Jehovah, before whoſe preſence the nations are as nothing, and lighter than vanity.

Conſider the juſtice of God! He rewardeth every man according

cording to his works; he is juſt in all his ways; the Judge of all the earth will do right; he is no reſpecter of perſons, but out of every nation, he that feareth God, and doeth righteouſneſs, ſhall be accepted of him. He has patience, and long forbearance; he is not in haſte to puniſh; judgment is the ſtrange work of Jehovah; but though ſlow in the execution of his threatenings, yet, unleſs prevented by repentance, his juſtice will repay; the juſt retribution of God is ſure; it overtakes every guilty and unreformed man, and will likewiſe overtake every proud, unjuſt, cruel nation: long did he forbear with the ante-deluvian race, with the Canaanites, with his ſervants the Jews, with all the nations of the earth. Oh! how long has he borne with the deſolating powers of Antichriſt; he has permitted them, in his aſtoniſhing forbearance, to ſpread confuſion, ſlaughter, and death, for twelve hundred and ſixty years over his Church, but the days of his patience are exhauſted; I will ariſe, ſaith my God, I will pour out my vengeance upon their iniquities; no longer ſhall their guilt, their pride, their oppreſſions, their cruelties, be hidden; I will demoliſh every power that protecteth them; I will give them blood to drink, for they are worthy.

It is a dangerous thing to be the enemy of God; he waits long before he is willing to correct; he loveth not the ſorrows, groans, and pains of his creatures; but he loveth us; happy we cannot be unleſs we love him; we cannot love him unleſs we are acquainted with him; to know him is not poſſible, whilſt wrath, malice, and ſelf-will continue; if, therefore, we will not lay them all at his feet, and follow Chriſt, we muſt in this life experience affliction; ſhould we eſcape it, ſtill life is ſhort; and if we are found enemies to God by wicked works, what ſhall we have to endure? It is, indeed, a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God, for our God is a conſuming fire; he can deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell. O! then, love the Lord your God; bleſs the hand that leads you to the knowledge of his ſalvation. O! examine your hearts, and try yourſelves if you are his enemies, or if you love and fear his name; if your heart boweth down to his juſtice, obeyeth his commands, and longeth for the coming of Chriſt: if you do theſe things, calm reſignation ſhall fill your ſouls with peace; happy ſhall you be here, and happy ſhall you be in the kingdom of your Lord.

END OF THE THIRD SERMON.

SERMON IV.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

MARK XIV. 29.

The Son of Man indeed goeth, as it is written of him; but wo to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed; good were it for that man if he had never been born.

THIS paſſage of Scripture has been thought by ſome to be the ſtrongeſt that could poſſibly be brought againſt the doctrine of God's univerſal and efficacious love; I think there are ſtronger paſſages than this, though no objections from Scripture or reaſon can be brought ſufficiently ſtrong to be called unanſwerable; but, on the contrary, a little reflection will, without many words, convince any candid and unprejudiced mind, that thoſe very paſſages, or arguments, will, without any diſtortion of them, be eaſily made to prove the truth of that doctrine they were brought to condemn.

The ſin of Judas was exceedingly great, let his motives have been what they might; for the greatneſs or ſmallneſs of a ſin depends not on the enormity of the act, but on the motives that led to it; the killing of a man may be juſtifiable ſelf-defence; the wounding of a man may, on the contrary, be the compaſſing his death, murder! both by the laws of God and man. Three motives are generally aſcribed to Judas as the cauſe of his conduct: 1ſt. Malice againſt the Saviour for ſo frequently diſtinguiſhing him in his diſcourſes, and at laſt pointing him out in the preſence of the reſt of the diſciples

disciples as the individual person who should betray him. It is said, from that time the Devil entered into Judas: like Satan, instead of correcting his bad principle, he gave up his whole soul to revenge, and determined to destroy the earthly existence of his master, because that master knew the depravity of his heart. If this motive for the conduct of Judas could be established, it would prove the basest motive that could possibly have actuated him, for it is a great crime to imagine the death of any one, a greater to endeavour to put that imagination in a way to be compleated; this is malice prepense; by the laws of every civilized nation, it would be called wilful murder.

2. The next motive ascribed to Judas, is avarice; this they say is demonstrable from the epithets which are applied to him, a devil, a thief, and from his bearing the bag. I suspect much the truth of this most commonly received motive for his conduct; had he been a thief, or a covetous man, would he have been trusted with the bag which contained that which was to supply all their wants? Our Lord needed not that any one should tell him what was in man, for he read the heart, and would not make any one to sin by putting them into an office where the temptation was greater than they, from their peculiar propensity, could have resisted; he was not the tempter of men, but their Saviour, and came not to destroy the souls of men, but to seek and restore that which was lost. If avarice had caused Judas to betray his master, when we consider how wealthy a party he had to deal with, the Sadducees and Pharisees, the rich, the most opulent men of the nation, is it not reasonable to suppose that he would have made a demand of wealth equal to his avaricious disposition, but how trifling was the sum he required, thirty pieces of silver; it appears from the smallness of it, that avarice was not, could not be his motive.

I remember that many years since I read a book which I have not from that time ever been able to meet with, this book laid down a motive for the conduct of Judas which to me appears to be the most rational and consistent with the rest of his conduct of any motive whatever that has since been ascribed unto him, and this motive was ambition; Judas appears to have possessed a very large portion of that ambition which the rest of the disciples exhibited in their conduct on various occasions; they all appear with the rest of the Jewish nation to have expected that the Messiah would become at that time a Saviour unto Israel from the hand of

the Romans. They could not behold him firſt crucified, and then exalted to the right hand of God, to have all power given unto him both in Heaven and in earth, that at the time appointed by the Father he might come in the clouds of Heaven, attended by the Angels of God, and the Spirits of the Juſt made perfect to take unto himſelf the dominion of the earth, and reigning peculiarly as King upon the throne of David, through the Jewiſh nation, to govern all the world: hence aroſe the contempt of the Jews for the mean appearance of Jeſus, and hence followed frequent diſputes who ſhould be the greateſt in the promiſed kingdom amongſt them who believed on him, hence they expected that he would ſoon caſt off his diſguiſe, and ſhew the glory of his character to that nation who would have repeatedly made him King, and to the temporal exaltation of his faithful diſciples. Led aſtray from the path of duty, through this principle of ambition, I conceive Judas to have been, when he betrayed his maſter: many were the times in which Judas had ſeen that all power was given unto Chriſt both in Heaven and in earth; he had ſeen the winds obey his voice, he had likewiſe beheld that creative powers belonged unto him when he cauſed the lopt off limbs of the maimed to ſhoot forth anew, as likewiſe when he fed the multitudes; he had known him when led to the brow of the mountain to be caſt down headlong, ſtrike thoſe enemies with temporary blindneſs, and unnoticed walk through the midſt of them; the miracles that he performed muſt have convinced him that the Father loved him, heard him always, and granted him whatſoever he aſked; he had heard Jeſus declare that he was the promiſed Meſſiah; the hope of the ancient Patriarchs; the Son of God; the King of Iſrael: ſeeing all theſe things, having a heart filled with ambition, doubtleſs he both hoped and expected that when he had betrayed his Lord into the hands of the Phariſees, his mortal enemies, that when they attempted to deſtroy his life, he would ariſe and ſhake himſelf as aforetimes, and take unto himſelf, by the greatneſs of his power, that dominion which, by inheritance, as alſo by promiſe, belonged unto him, that his nation ſhould then have the government of the world, and his apoſtles, according to the promiſe made them, ſhould ſit upon twelves thrones, governing the twelve tribes of Iſrael. Doubtleſs he reaſoned thus within his own mind, three years have I followed my Lord, and notwithſtanding his repeated declarations that he is the Meſſiah, and the various manifeſtations of his divine power, I am no nearer the poſſeſſion

poſſeſſion of the promiſed kingdom than I was the firſt day? what can I do to make my Maſter aſſume his real character, ſhew his power, and take unto himſelf his great glory? For this purpoſe I will betray him into the hands of his enemies, I know their rage and malice againſt him; when they attempt to execute their wicked purpoſes, he will, with a word, ſtrike them dead, and then take the government upon his ſhoulders and reign from ſea to ſea, and from ſhore to ſhore, and from the banks of the ſwelling Jordan to the utmoſt coaſts where the raging ocean daſhes the rocky ramparts of the earth; my Lord knows the heart of his faithful ſervant, he loves me, he will perceive that the deſire of his exaltation was the cauſe of what I did, he will pardon my zeal, and knowing that it was not hatred to his perſon, character, or office, but love to him, and anxious longing to behold his glory, I ſhall eaſily perſuade him to forgive me, and on account of my ſuperior anxiety in his cauſe, be exalted to the higheſt place of honour in his kingdom, becauſe by my means the prophecies have been accompliſhed, therefore I ſhall be received into the greateſt favour, and have the higheſt honours conferred upon me.

That which renders this motive the moſt probable is that, when Judas ſaw all his expectations diſappointed, his maſter led like a lamb to the ſlaughter, and inſtead of frowning awful terror, beheld him arraigned at the unjuſt tribunal of wicked men, meekly ſubmitting to all their ſcoffings, ſpittings, and contempt, ſaw him ſcourged, crowned with thorns, and led forth to be crucified, he appears to have been aſtoniſhed and regardleſs of danger; he manifeſted his ſorrow by hurrying to the prieſts, confeſſing his guilt, returning the reward of his iniquity, and when all would not undo that which his impatient ambition had done, the violence of his grief ſtrangled him, as I think the paſſage might be rendered xxvii. 5. in Math. which ſays, that he hanged himſelf, particularly as the circumſtance mentioned by Peter of his falling down upon his face, and his bowels guſhing out, ſeems to confirm it, there being inſtances of very violent grief occaſioning ſuch a ſuffocation.

Great indeed was the crime of Judas, if it went no further than the betraying innocent blood; when we conſider the difference between a ſtate of guilt and a ſtate of purity, we may indeed ſay, with our Lord, good were it for that man had he never been born. But with how much greater propriety may it be ſaid, when we conſider the perſon of him

whom he betrayed, his friend, his Lord, the King of Israel the Son of God. Let his motives have been ever so pure the awful consequences should teach us never to do evil that good may come, for however we may plead the excuse before men, the time will come when, with anguish of soul and confusion of face, we shall own our condemnation to be just. Judas did thus; how painful were the feelings of his heart, how bitter his reflections. I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood: how did he curse his folly when those who tempted him to evil replied to him, what is that to us, see thou to it. Overpowered by the reproaches of his own soul, groaning under the prospect of the crucifixion of his beloved Lord, the violence of his grief overpowered nature, his inwards swelled, his breath was stopped, suffocation ensued, he fell down on his face, his swollen carcase burst, and his bowels gushed out—awful state! Behold the men who despised his Lord pass by the bleeding carcase, and whilst they approve the deed he had done, curse the doer of it, and brand his name with traitor. Better indeed had it been for him had he never been born; better, far better from the womb to have passed to peace and joy; ignorant of evil, to have gone to those peaceful abodes where the wicked can never trouble, and where no contending passions ere disturb the peaceful breast.

But when we consider the personal consequences it was of to Judas. He had laboured for three years in the vineyard of Christ, and would have had his name, but for this offence, enrolled amongst the ambassadors of Christ, and after a few short years of trial, would have rested from his labors, walking in his own uprightness, till the coming of Christ in glory, then would he have come with him to be high seated on a glorious throne, to reign with Christ, and sit as a Judge over a tribe in Israel. But oh! how altered was his situation by this offence! his apostleship taken away, the glory within his reach by one false step removed, instead of a fulness of approbation for integrity of conduct, confusion of face at the sight of his master would now clothe his countenance with shame; add the personal consequences that keep rising one above another as the effects of his sin, and we shall find no need for endless never ceasing flames to justify the saying of our Lord, good had it been for this man had he never been born, for then would he not have tantalized himself with the prospect of glory, to have sunk into such despair and horrors of mind that the tongue of man cannot

cannot deſcribe: but unſullied by ambition, and uncontaminated by ſin, his ſpirit would have departed from the womb to the realms of peace, where ſorrow could never have clouded his brow, where imagination could not paint ideal proſpects in all the beauties of the garments of truth, that they might vaniſh in a moment, and leave him to the horrors of deſolation, whilſt reflection painted, in deepeſt tints, the vileneſs of ambition and ingratitude.

Without bringing in the awful ideas of endleſs, unceaſing puniſhment, there has been even in the woes of this life ſomething ſo painful to the feelings of the mind, as to cauſe even good men to wiſh they had never been born; and that, although they were aſſured of their Creator's favour, and were confident of happineſs after death. Holy Job, 3d Chap. ſpake and ſaid, "Let the day periſh wherein I was born; and the night, wherein it was ſaid, There is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkneſs. Let not God regard it from above, neither let the light ſhine upon it. Let darkneſs and the ſhadow of death ſtain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackneſs of the day terrify it, &c. becauſe it ſhut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid ſorrow from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghoſt when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me, or why the breaſts that I ſhould ſuck? For now ſhould I have been ſtill, and been quiet, I ſhould have ſlept, then ſhould I have been at reſt: with kings and counſellors of the earth, which built deſolate places for themſelves: or with princes that had gold, who filled their houſes with ſilver: or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never ſaw the light. There the wicked ceaſe from troubling: and there the weary be at reſt. There the priſoners reſt together, they hear not the voice of the oppreſſor. The ſmall and the great is there, and the ſervant is free from his maſter." Again, in the 10th Chap. v. 18, Job expreſſes the ſame thought that it would have been better for him never to have been born. "Wherefore then haſt thou brought me forth out of the womb? O that I had given up the ghoſt, and no eye had ſeen me! I ſhould have been as though I had not been. I ſhould have been carried from the womb to the grave." Yet, was this man afraid of endleſs miſery? Although the day of reſurrection is at our door, comparatively to what it was in his day, yet where is the beſt of men in modern times that expreſſes himſelf with a ſtronger

confidence

confidence of faith in his coming, who ſhall reward every man according to their works, and give rewards to all that fear his name, both ſmall and great. "I know," ſaid he, "my Redeemer liveth, and he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my ſkin worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God, whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf; and my eyes ſhall behold, and not another, though my reins be conſumed within me." And ſo great was the holy man's confidence in the goodneſs of his Creator, that he cried out, "Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him:" yea, ſo confident was he of the integrity of his conduct, that he could appeal to the all-ſearching eye of the all-ſeeing Jehovah for the truth of his innocency; and could ſay, "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I ſhall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his ſteps, his ways have I kept and not declined; neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips. I have eſteemed the words of his mouth more than my neceſſary food." It is therefore evident that he had no alluſion to endleſs miſery, yet he wiſhed that he had never been born, and that whilſt he had before him a certain proſpect of a glorious reſurrection, and a preſent conviction of the integrity of his ways, with the full approbation of Jehovah to the whole of his conduct; for he never retracted any part of his former aſſertions, but thoſe in which he had dared to call God to an account for his conduct towards him; therefore, without fearing future puniſhment, good men may wiſh they had never been born.

We, in like manner, find the holy prophet Jeremiah, 20th Chap. expreſſing himſelf in ſimilar language; he had ſuffered but one night's impriſonment, and inſtead of conſidering that thoſe who ſuffer for well doing the ſpirit of God, and of glory, reſteth upon them, he fooliſhly charged the Moſt High, "O Lord! thou haſt deceived me, and I am deceived; thou art ſtronger than I, and haſt prevailed; I am in deriſion daily; every one mocketh me. For ſince I ſpake, I cried out, I cried violence and ſpoil: becauſe the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a deriſion daily. Then I ſaid, I will not make mention of him; nor ſpeak any more in his name. But his word was in my heart, as a burning fire ſhut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not ſtay. For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every ſide: report, (ſay they) and we will report it. All my familiars watched

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for my halting ; saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we will take our revenge on him. But, the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one : therefore my persecuters shall stumble, and they shall not prevail ; they shall be greatly ashamed, for they shall not prosper ; their concealed shame shall not be forgotten. But Jehovah of Hosts, who trieth the righteous, whe seeth the reins and the heart, I shall behold thy vengeance on them, for unto thee have I opened my cause. Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord : for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evil doers." Here we behold the assuredness of the prophet in the favour of his God ; he was certain, fully confident in him, in whom he believed ; he well knew that he would never leave him nor forsake him ; he looked beyond the present moment ; he saw his enemies ashamed at their past conduct ; he beheld the arms of the Almighty Jehovah around him for his protection, and striking terror into his foes ; yet, whilst the majesty of his protecter causes him to burst out into a song of praise, even then, at that moment, he likewise cried out, " Cursed be the day wherein I was born ; let not the day wherein my mother bare me, be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father ; saying, A man child is born unto thee, making him very glad. And let that man be as the cities which the Lord overthrew, and repented not ; and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noon tide. Because he slew me not from the womb ; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb always great with me ; wherefore came I out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame ?" Here then scripture explains itself, and demonstrates that our Lord had not in his idea at the time a thought concerning the endless misery of Judas, for we may observe that the language of our Lord is always a comment upon the Old Testament ; and in this speech concerning Judas, he uses an Old Testament phrase, a phrase which we have shewn that two good men used, men who were the servants of the Lord, who were his peculiar favourites, approved of by the Searcher of Hearts for the integrity of their conduct, and the perfection of their obedience ; yet they, with a certainty of the divine protection, and the full assurance of future happiness, on account of present trouble, wished they had never been born.

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That which man eſteems a happineſs, as, being the ſource from whence pleaſure flows, is various, according to the circumſtances in which mankind happen to be. In the days of our Lord, when ſociety was about to be deſtroyed by divine judgment, it was a bleſſing to have no children, to have no tie whatever that might impede their flight from the awful troubles which, like an inundating flood, was about to overwhelm the Jewiſh nation; but in the days of Solomon, when the kingdom was bleſſed with peace and temporal proſperity, that wiſe prince pronounced him to be a happy man who was bleſſed with long life, much wealth, and many children. This was the middle age of the world, the moſt glorious period it has ever yet known, when the ſons of Iſrael, the firſt born of God, were governed by the wiſeſt of men, even by him who was a type of the Prince of Peace. Yet hear, ye Chriſtians, what this great, (and 'ere he fell into idolatry), this good man hath ſaid, Eccleſ. vi. v. 3. "If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, ſo that the days of his years be many, and his ſoul be not filled with good, and alſo that he have no burial, I ſay an untimely birth is better than he." What would ye, who believe in Chriſt, think of that man, who, after having lived many years in the enjoyment of the bounties of Providence, and been the parent of an hundred children, and yet ſhould be diſcontented and unſatisfied with the good that God had given him, and unwilling to lay down this frail body in the duſt, from whence it firſt came; and who, after death, ſhould not have the honours of an elegant funeral, would you think ſuch a one had better never to have been born? Would you not think the bleſſings of Providence infinitely ſurpaſſed the petty honours of a leaden coffin, a hearſe and ſix, eſcutcheons, feathers, and all the little pomp that attends the burial of the great? I know you would. You look for glory—for immortality. You believe that the power of that God, who hath raiſed up your bleſſed maſter, is capable of collecting the ſcattered fragments of your frame from the four winds of the heavens, and of reuniting them, after the ſample of the glorified body of Chriſt Jeſus. Yet, ſays the great, the wiſe, the inſpired Solomon, "I ſay an untimely birth is better than he, for he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkneſs, and his name ſhall be covered with darkneſs." And what would this be to you, if your name is written in the Lamb's book of life? Let darkneſs and total oblivion cover your name

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from the memory of the ſons of men, ſo you but have it honoured by your Lord, before his holy angels, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect; grateful for the bleſſings you have enjoyed, you dare not to ſay, with Solomon, That the man who hath poſſeſſed ſuch a ſuper-abundance of the bounties of Providence, "hath not ſeen the ſun, nor known any thing," much leſs dare you to draw a contraſt between ſuch a one and an untimely birth, and pronounce in favour of the latter, becauſe "he hath more reſt than the other: yea, though he live a thouſand years twice told, yet hath he ſeen no good." Where, ſays the greateſt and wiſeſt of men, is the difference between the child who never was born, and the hoary head laden with glory? It is, ſaith he, in favour of the child who never came to the birth, for he hath never ſeen trouble. This language is much ſtronger than that which our Lord uſes concerning Judas; he only ſaid, Good had it been for that man had he never been born; not expreſſing even a thought concerning his future happineſs or miſery; and who are we, that we ſhould dare to add to the language of Chriſt? Will he approve of us for painting, in all the horrors that human language can afford, the ſufferings that Judas ſhall undergo throughout a never-ending eternity? Or will he not rather ſay, Judgement is my ſtrange work, I came not to deſtroy but to ſave; and who art thou that calleſt thyſelf by my name, and readeſt of the contrition of a repenting ſinner, and yet ſo deſpiſeſt the glorious character that belongeth to me as a Saviour, as to aſſert that I ſhall endleſsly delight in the groans, and anguiſh, and deſpair, of a returning prodigal, or an erring child? How often haſt thou betrayed my cauſe, and by the puſillanimity of thy conduct led thy brethren into evil? If I extend mercy to thee, why not to Judas? If I have overlooked the pride of thy heart, the ſelfiſhneſs of thy conduct, the perverſeneſs of thy ways, the weakneſs of thy faith, ſhall I caſt off for ever that man who bore for three years the croſs with me, that man who ſhared my ſufferings in the fleſh, and dared to take a part with me in the reproaches of mankind? Go thou, my diſciple, and learn that I love not only to ſhew mercy myſelf, but that I prefer a love of mercy, and an exhibition of it in the conduct of my diſciples, before hecatombs of burnt offerings, and all the pompous ſacrifices that the pride of humnn nature can cauſe to aſcend before me.

As our bleſſed Lord did not revile Judas, or reproach him, or ſpeak of him with harſh epithets, no more did his apoſtles. Compaſſion and truth dropped from their lips; they felt for him, and mention his name with tenderneſs, but with veracity, aſſembled together to chooſe another apoſtle in his room. We do not hear them exclaiming againſt his character, and holding him up in the eternity of torments as an object of terror, leſt any of themſelves ſhould betray another, or betray their Maſter by betraying his cauſe. None of theſe unkind ſpeeches dropped from their lips; but ' thou, Lord, which knoweth the hearts of all men, ſhew whether of theſe two thou haſt choſen, that he may take part in this miniſtry and apoſtleſhip, from which Judas by tranſgreſſion fell, that he might go to his own place." If Judas fell, that he might go to his own place, and ſuch fall was pre-acknowledged by God in the prophetical writing, what man that calls himſelf a believer in the ſcripture will be bold enough to aſſert, that the intention of that Being, whoſe name is love, was to cauſe Judas to fall that he might conſign him to endleſs, unceaſing miſery? If Judas had a place peculiarly called his *own*, I ſhould rather think it was a throne in the kingdom of our Lord, and that his repentance, and public death, were conſidered by Chriſt, as a ſufficient expiation of the crime which he had committed; for our Lord had before ſaid, that his twelve apoſtles " ſhould ſit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael. Judas was then alive, and our Lord never retracted the promiſe he then made, and Matthias was not choſen to ſit upon the throne prepared for Judas but to fill up the part (which was vacated by his death) in the miniſtry, and to compleat the number of apoſtles, who were to be the ambaſſadors, who were to go over the whole world, to make known the love of God manifeſted in Chriſt Jeſus, and to beſeech men to be reconciled unto the Father through him. But to aſſert that this place was hell, and that the fire thereof ſhall never ceaſe during the exiſtence of the immortal God, I deny, and demand of ſuch bold aſſerters to come to the word and to the teſtimony to ſupport their bold aſſertions; and till they do this, with all my candour I muſt confeſs that I believe that evil will befal that man who evil thinks.

The ſouls of children exiſt before the birth of the child. Elizabeth ſaid unto Mary, " Lo! as ſoon as the voice of thy ſalutation ſounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy;" which could not have been unleſs the matter

ter of which the babe was formed had been animated by the ſpirit of life, therefore the children carried from the womb to the grave are the happieſt of all human beings; their eyes behold no ſorrow, the ſound of woe never breaketh upon their ears, anxiety diſturbeth not their repoſe, they feel not the pangs of fear, of doubt, of ſuſpicion, care cometh not near their boſom, their thoughts are not elevated by hope, and then in a moment hurled into deſpair; but their bodies lay down in the ſilent grave, there undiſturbed it ſleeps with the aſhes of the wiſe, the witty, the fair and the great, whilſt the immortal part chaunts before the throne of its Father the overflowing ſong of grateful love. Better indeed had it been for Judas not to have been born, then would he have eſcaped all the woes of human life, and the miſeries of deſpair; the maddening ſtings of conſcience, awakened by ambition, would have been for ever unkown; ignorant of nought but ſorrow; eternity would have been an unclouded day, paſſed unceaſingly in the preſence of his God.

The Great Parent of mankind has manifeſted his love to human nature, by taking at leaſt one third of the infants that are born to himſelf before they are two years old. How amazing is the providence of God, who ſeeing all the events that ſhall happen, in mercy takes away unto himſelf ſo large a portion of the human race, whilſt they are comparatively innocent, being free from ſin, and pain, and ſorrow, and uncontaminated by thoſe perverted paſſions that hurry the grown-up man into vice, judgment, and the ſecond death. Truly without ſtraining the point, had it not been proverbial, our Lord might have ſaid, Good had it been for Judas had he never been born. The days will ſoon arrive when the ſame divine love will operate in a different way, Chriſt ſhall reign upon the earth, and then children and the fruit of the womb ſhall be an heritage from the Lord, for all ſhall know Jehovah, from the leaſt unto the greateſt. Thrice happy days, when the ſcythe of divine love ſhall no longer be lifted up to ſweep the children of men from the earth!

I have been compared with Judas by ſome who have thought that he was doomed to endleſs miſery, and have been in their eſteem found more guilty, and by them doomed to a much ſeverer puniſhment. Judas, ſay they, only betrayed the word incarnate, but you the word revealed; the infirmities of human nature might be urged in his favour, but having the whole blaze of revealed truth, your perverſion of it renders you far more inexcuſable than he was, and your place in

hell tenfold hotter than that in which he was confined: but let me be condemned by man, I ſhall ſtand cleared of the charge before my God. I therefore rejoice and give thanks to my God that he hath made known his boundleſs love unto me, and continually do I bleſs his name for having called me to proclaim it to the children of men: I mark the day as the happieſt of my life in which I firſt ſtood up in defence of the univerſal and efficacious love of God; for Jehovah ſaith, Iſaiah xlv. 22. "Look unto me and be ye ſaved all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and none elſe. I have ſworn by myſelf, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteouſneſs, and ſhall not return, that unto me every knee ſhall bow, every tongue ſhall ſwear. Surely! each ſhall ſay, In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength: to him all ſhall come, and "all that are incenſed againſt him ſhall be aſhamed." Since, therefore, Jehovah hath ſworn by himſelf, that unto him every knee ſhall bow, and every tongue ſhall ſwear, every creature muſt return to his firſt eſtate of pure, holy, loving obedience, and every creature muſt regain his inheritance, and do homage for it to him who is the Great Creator and Proprietor of all, even unto Jeſus, by and for whom all things that are were created; and before this can poſſibly take place, he will know their ſincerity, for he ſearcheth the hearts and tryeth the reins, and he will not have a divided heart, but he will have the whole heart, and that perfect obedience to his will, which can alone ſpring from a principle of love.

Bowing and ſwearing on the part of the criminal, ſheweth pardon and protection on the part of the Sovereign; ſince then God hath ſworn by himſelf, that the time ſhall come when every knee ſhall bow unto him, and every tongue ſwear unto him, he hath by ſo doing ſworn that there ſhall come a time when every creature that hath a knee to bow, or a tongue to ſwear with, ſhall find that pardon and protection from him which he only as a ſovereign Lord of all the earth can beſtow. He ſays, "the word is gone out of my mouth in righteouſneſs, and ſhall not return." Was I therefore to aſſert that by far the greateſt part of mankind ſhould be damned for ever, ſome few bigots I might pleaſe, but I ſhould contradict the word of divine truth; I ſhould give God the lie, and challenge the faithfulneſs of his promiſe; therefore I dare not do it, for he hath ſworn by himſelf, and the oath ſhall be accompliſhed; every knee in heaven, in earth, and in hell ſhall bow unto him, and by his name, and in obedience to his will every tongue ſhall ſwear. Self

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abaſed with the conſciouſneſs of their dependance upon their God, they ſhall confeſs their guilt and depravity, and own that in Jehovah alone is all their righteouſneſs, and from him is their ſtrength. To him alone ſhall they come with holy reverential joy; yea, even all that were incenſed againſt him for his providential conduct, or the purity of his truth ſhall be aſhamed and confounded at their paſt folly, although they rejoice that God is pacified towards them, whilſt in Jehovah the ſeed of Abraham by faith ſhall be juſtified, and ſhall glory in his name.

Unleſs the Apoſtle Paul can be ſaid to uſe vain, empty, high ſounding words, he gives in the 1ſt chapter of the Coloſſians, the ſtrongeſt proof of the univerſal reſtoration, for he ſays of our bleſſed Lord, that he "is the image of the inviſible God, the firſt born of every creature; for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt, and he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firſt-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence: for it pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell; and having made peace by the blood of his croſs by him to *reconcile all things* unto himſelf; *by him, whether they be things in* earth or things in heaven." Here then the Apoſtle confines the reconciliation of Chriſt to the *all things* that he created in heaven or in earth; for it is not likely that he would have changed the extent of the meaning of the words *all things*, without having given us notice; his not having given us ſuch notice, I cannot but conclude, that if the ſinner or evil ſpirit can be produced who was not created by him, then inſtances are to be produced who ſhall not be reconciled by him, for the Apoſtle draws a parallel between the creation of all by and for Chriſt, and the reconciliation of all by the blood of the croſs, that he might have the willing homage of all that were created by and for him. I cannot therefore but conclude, that the argument of the Apoſtle proves that the Reſtoration of all, is as general and univerſal, wherever Reconciliation was wanted, as creation itſelf was.

I dare not to depreciate the reconciliation by Chriſt Jeſus, though by not doing it I ſhould loſe every friend I have in the world, I muſt hold it in all the extent which the ſcriptures declare, and that not becauſe others do, but becauſe my God hath ſhewed me that it is my duty to do ſo; for I have

have not received the doctrine of the reconciliation of all from men, but from the ſcriptures of divine truth, and I ſee the beauty of the doctrine, and my ſoul feels its agreement with experimental religion, having felt its power and experienced the peace of mind, the joy and righteouſneſs that it brings, I charge all you who believe in the doctrine to publiſh the glad tidings of reconciliation unto all mankind, ſpread wide abroad the joyful news that God by Chriſt is reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing unto his creatures their treſpaſſes and ſins, and that finally all ſhall be ſubdued to bow down to the ſceptre of divine love, and own Jeſus the Mediator to be Lord of all to the glory of God the Father. By thus ſpreading around you the glorious news of univerſal reconciliation with me, you ſhall ſoon behold that it is a doctrine whoſe fruits are benevolence, purity, and active obedience to all the commands of Chriſt; and divine wiſdom has now in mercy to the children of men called forth various arguments in favour of this doctrine that have been for ages paſt hidden from man, on purpoſe that the knowledge of it may harmonize the ſcriptures, be in agreement with reaſon, and every attribute of the Deity and the wants of his creatures, and by ſo doing deſtroy infidelity from the earth.

There is no poſſibility of diſputing ſo as to gainſay particular truths. It is a truth that God hath commanded us in his word to lift up holy hands for *all* without wrath or doubting; now, can any man pray for all *without doubting* if he does not believe that God will hearken to his prayer? If the heart is filled with the love of God and man, he may wiſh it, but he cannot pray without doubting, if he does not believe that his prayer will be anſwered.

When you firſt received the pardoning love of Chriſt in all its freeneſs upon your heart, did you not at that time perceive there was a ſufficiency in him to ſave, not only you, but all the world; nay, ten thouſand worlds had ſo many needed it? and did not your whole ſoul long and pant that the whole of the human race might become partakers of it; yea, even your enemies? Would you have left one of the human race unreſtored had your power been equal to your good will? Is there one of any nation, tribe or family that you would not have wiſhed that the blood of Chriſt might not blot out his ſins? On the contrary, had you had it in your power, would you not gladly have parted with all ſo that you might ſave all? Had you thought your prayers would have been anſwered,

anſwered, would you not have aſked for the ſalvation of all? and had you poſſeſſed power, would you not have brought all to the knowledge of and obedience to the truth? To theſe queſtions every Chriſtian will anſwer in the affirmative. From whence did they obtain this diſpoſition, from nature or from nature's God? The univerſality of the experience points to the ſource from whence it flows—it was from God the Creator of all, that the univerſal love to all, and the ardent deſire to do good to all firſt aroſe. If then this beneficent temper came from him, how much more does it dwell in him if the ſmall drop that you, O believer! poſſeſs, makes you feel ſo exquiſitely for the happineſs of others? how unfathomably deep muſt the ocean of love be which is in him? Yours is indeed but a drop from the ocean, or a ſpark from the immortal fire, cannot he then accompliſh the purpoſes of his love? You may deſire to do the good which you are unable, your ſpirit may be willing whilſt your fleſh is weak, but that which God determines he can perform; he has the means in his power, and knows well how to guide them, and therefore he has determined to reſtore all, and bring them to the knowledge of the truth: he will do it; altho' it may take ages to accompliſh it. This to us makes it appear long, for he acts not raſhly like weak man, but conſiſtently and effectually; he will therefore ſo act upon his fallen creatures, as to reſtore them conſiſtently with their knowledge and the freedom of their will, but at laſt "all things ſhall be ſubdued into Chriſt, then ſhall the Son himſelf be ſubject unto him that put all things under him, that *God may be all in all.*"

SERMON

SERMON V.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

JOHN XIV. 1—3.

Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe alſo in me. In my Father's houſe are many manſions; if it was not ſo, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo.

NONE of you can poſſibly be ignorant that man is born to trouble; pain of body, anxiety of mind, frequent diſappointments, with various direful effects ariſing from error, prejudice, and ignorance, are as certain fruits of our preſent fallen eſtate, as an effect can follow a cauſe. By all the experience of all mankind, and by all our own paſt experience, it is not in the power of any, or indeed every earthly poſſeſſion, to keep us from anxiety and trouble; cares will frequently cloud the mind, and without ſomething more ſolid than earthly good, for the ſoul to reſt upon, the mind of man will always find an empty void that wanteth to be filled up; a reſtleſs craving of ſpirit, that panteth for an unknown ſomething to gratify it; a peace, that human wiſdom, the moſt endearing friendſhip, though attended with wealth, and pomp, and glory, can never give. Behold Solomon, the wiſe, the rich, the powerful, the glorious; the ſons of God liſtened with attention to the wiſdom that dropped from his lips; riches were to him as the ſand upon the ſhores of the mighty

mighty deep ; nations feared, honoured, and obeyed him ; diſtant realms heard of his fame, and came from the utmoſt bounds of the earth to behold his glory. If theſe things could give happineſs, who amongſt the ſons of men would have had ſo large a portion of it ? Yet hear him in the fulneſs of poſſeſſion pronounce their juſt eulogium,—" Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," empty of ſolid good, light as the paſſing ſhadow ; they fill not up the immortal mind—with ought—but vexation of ſpirit. For us, it is an animating thought, that infinite goodneſs has propoſed a remedy for all theſe diſquietudes that trouble and perplex the mind in this tranſitory ſtate. Paſſing, therefore, from the conſideration of what will not ſatisfy the expanſive ſoul of man, I ſhall proceed to ſpeak of theſe things that will render our happineſs permanent.

" Let not your hearts be troubled ; ye believe in God!" What is God ? Where is the deſcendant of Adam who can explain his nature ? Say ye philoſophers, whilſt tracing effects to cauſes, have ye been ever able to trace out the Great Firſt Cauſe ? Can you tell his form, or point out the mode of his exiſtence ? Where is the throne on which he ſits, or the etherial palace that contains him ? All, and every queſtion concerning him, is as far beyond your anſwering, as the revolutions of the heavenly bodies are beyond the inveſtigation of the meaneſt reptile that crawls on the earth.

What is God ? Who can tell ? Who think upon ſuch an elevated ſubject without being overwhelmed with its magnitude ! Of neceſſity he muſt be eternal ; but, alas ! what is eternity ? He muſt be infinite ; but who can comprehend infinity ? So poor is human language found to be, when it would attempt to paſs the narrow confines of finite intelligence. Incomprehenſible in his nature, yet he certainly exiſts, or we could never have been. Infinite, unbounded in intelligence, muſt the Great Creator be, or, he never could have communicated underſtanding to ſuch an innumerable number of beings. Wiſe is he beyond human comprehenſion, or he could never have foretold the various occurrences that ſhould take place, ages before the agents in thoſe tranſactions had an exiſtence. Yes, the Creator of all is, indeed, in power unbounded, and in wiſdom infinite, and far beyond being ſearched out by the circumſcribed underſtanding of his creature, Man.

The ſame argument that teaches us that there is a God, makes known to us that he is love. It is by inference alone

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that we know he exists. The heavens, the earth, animated and vegetable nature, all cry aloud that there is a God. Their order, their proportions, their wonderful economy, in every minute particular, as well as the astonishing regularity in the combined arrangement of the whole mass, unerringly demonstrate the whole to be the workmanship of one all-wise and almighty Intelligence; and the same mode of reasoning by inference must prove that he is love. He could not have any design in the formation of any creatures, but to communicate a degree of happiness adapted to the capacity he had given it for enjoyment. A being entirely and completely happy, could not have a wish but to make others happy also. Undoubtedly he must have as benign intentions as the creatures he hath made. Whence was the beneficence of human nature derived?—Is it acquired by man, or is it an emanation from divine love? Of what use is the misery of his creatures to God; doth their wretchedness give him glory?—if not, the Most High could not have created any being to be finally miserable.

As the works of creation declare the existence of God, and the existence of creation manifests that he is Love; in like manner the whole of his providence manifests his goodness: all that lives, and breathes, and moves, has its existence from him; it is he who supplieth all their wants; it is he that opened wide his liberal hand, and all things are filled with good; that tender mercy, that is over all his creatures, is made manifest by the whole government of his providence. The Creator of all nature becomes the steward of his own workmanship, and condescends to spread the tables of those creatures his hands have formed; it is he that waits upon them, he watcheth all their motions, and stands ready to supply the desires of every heart.

The book of nature goes thus far, but the book of revelation goes still further; it lays open to the understanding of man the secret springs that regulate the providential conduct of duty: there we behold not only wisdom, love, power, and goodness, but heights and depths of them, far beyond what the loftiest imagination of the wisest of men could dare to have thought of. Had it not been for revelation, where could we have beheld the love of the Deity going forth in acts of mercy and benignity to his rebellious creatures. How could the sinner, man, have known that his Sovereign would have looked upon him with a propitious eye, and pardoned his rebellion? Conscious guilt, and the awful expectation

pectation of deſerved puniſhment would have ſhook his ſoul with anguiſh and deſpair; but the book of revelation holds forth to man, a God whoſe hands are loaded with mercies for his creatures in diſtreſs; a God not only capable, but willing, to recover them from their preſent fallen ſtate. A God, whoſe character is, that he is infinite in goodneſs, pardoning iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin. The heathen world, with the book of nature laying open before them, and aided by tradition to read its ſacred pages; yet doubted this ſublime truth: hence they thought their gods had their boſoms ſhaken by the ſame abominable paſſions that agitated their own troubled breaſts; revenge and malice, hatred and cruelty, ſwayed their ſceptres over unhappy ſubjects; but with our "Jehovah there is mercy, and with him plenteous redemption," Pſal. cxxx. 7. therefore, Iſaiah lv. 7. "Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him turn unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." For, Job xxx. 27 and 28, "he looketh upon men, and if any ſay, I have ſinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his ſoul from going into the pit, and his life ſhall ſee the light."

The belief of the exiſtence of a God is well calculated to give eaſe under the troubles of life. We are weak and helpleſs, incapable of foreſeeing danger, and equally incapable of averting it when ſeen. The conſciouſneſs of an omnipreſent Being, who not only loves us, but who is continually upon the watch to do us good, and who always orders all the concerns of this our mortal exiſtence in ſuch a manner, as is moſt conducive for our preſent peace and future glory; is indeed a thought, that muſt tend to brighten up the dark ſhades that will continually becloud our temporal journey. It is a belief that will give us joy under the darkeſt diſpenſations of Providence, it will cauſe a ray of divine light to pierce through the gloomy cloud; it will indeed give confidence to our ſteps, and chear our hearts with the animating hopes of future glory.

In the awful hour of death what comfort doth the belief of the exiſtence of God afford to the departing ſpirit of the dying ſaint. And to you, O ye ſons of men, what ſupport would ſuch a belief yield in that trying hour.—For you ſoon muſt die,—in a few fleeting years at moſt,—and perhaps days,—hours,—or even moments, and your mortal exiſtence is over. If you have this belief happy are you; if

your ſoul is fixed upon the rock of ages, from a firm perſuaſion that "Jehovah liveth for ever," and, that after death, you ſhall leave this earth and earthly things, and ſeek that bright abode, where liveth, in light inacceſſible, the immortal God;—how calmly reſigned will you meet the awful ſtroke.—Death, diveſted of all his terrors, may ſtand before you, whilſt the jaws of the gloomy grave ſhall ſeem decorated with the delights of paradiſe, to welcome you into thoſe manſions of reſt, and peace, and joy.

The belief of a God, rightly applied, is, therefore, an animating thought to the believer, in all the various occurrences of life, whether proſperous or adverſe, whether painful or joyful; whatſoever may be the ſcenes in which he is engaged, in them all he beholdeth the otherwiſe inviſible hand that guides every ſpring for the good of thoſe that love him: he ſees that all are but means in the hands of Infinite Wiſdom to occaſion greater holineſs here, that he may give increaſing glory in the age to come.

"Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me;" and a joyful thing it is that we have a Chriſt to believe in. What a comfort it is to man, that the Son of God took our nature upon him, and became in all things like unto us, ſin only excepted. Under every temptation, what a heart-cheering circumſtance it is for us to know, thus was my Lord tempted, and he endured the temptation, he became a conqueror over it, that he might be able to comfort and ſuccour us under all our temptations. It is he that appoints our trials, and he well knows our ſtrength; and if for the advancement of our future glory, he permits us to be tried to the uttermoſt, he will never permit any temptation to go beyond our ſtrength; but will make a way of eſcape, that we may behold his goodneſs, rely upon his care, and evermore confide in his protection and aſſiſtance.

When the Son of the Higheſt took human nature upon him, he took not the regal, or the princely dignity, he had not his name enrolled amongſt the mighty or the wealthy; no independence of ſociety marked the ſituation that he choſe, but he took upon him the form of a ſervant; hence all the higher ranks may learn to truſt him, for he was higher than the higheſt of them all; he ruled not like them, a few of the ſons of men; but was the chief prince, the king of kings, the governor of the whole earth; therefore the higheſt ranks of mankind may indeed fly to him for ſhelter, and caſt their

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every care upon him. But ye lower ranks of ſociety, ye poor dependent ſons of men, how has he graced your ſituation.—Are ye poor?—he was dependent upon the bounty of women.—Does your cottage ſcarce ſhelter you from the ſcorching ſun, or midnight blaſt?—he had not a place where to lay his head. The Creator of heaven and earth, the king of kings, in his own dominions, wanted that ſhelter himſelf had provided for ſparrows and foxes. Are ye deſpiſed?—behold him ridiculed, laughed at, crowned with thorns, mocked, buffeted, ſpit upon. Is your good evil ſpoken of?—behold his life, a life ſpent in the exerciſe of every act of beneficence, and yet the ſcorn he was of thoſe for whom he was ſpending his ſtrength. Do your friends forſake you in adverſity? In the hour of danger one of his friends betrayed him, and the reſt forſook him and fled. Are you ill-treated and falſely accuſed?—he was marked as a drunkard, a heretic, a friend of Satan, his character blaſted, and to complete their villainly, under the ſolemn mockery of law, unjuſtly put to a cruel death. He has therefore given us ſtrength to endure temptation and comfort under all our afflictions in every various ſituation of life; for he was in all tempted, even as we are; but in all was without ſin for he never yielded to temptatation; yet the face of his Father was hidden from him, when under dreadful agony he cried 'My God! My God! Why haſt thou forſaken me?" With what confidence, with what full aſſurance may we truſt him in all the various ſcenes of life! Jeſus, our friend, our brother, our Saviour, he beholds us, he ſees our diſtreſs, he pities our weakneſs, he ſympathizes with us, he feels for all our pains, he liſtens to every groan, he will counſel, aſſiſt, and ſupport us under every affliction.

The ſame Jeſus is now highly exalted, and ſits at the right hand of the Father. He hath taken human nature with him to the throne, and by it he has raiſed the ſons of Adam higher in the ſcale of beings, higher than the Angelic Hoſt, thoſe pure and Holy Beings who have never fallen from their allegiance. He that was deſpiſed and rejected of mankind is now highly exalted, and has a name given that is above every name that can be named in Heaven and on earth; we therefore who believe on him ought to rejoice in tribulation, knowing that he is both able and willing to deliver us from all our troubles.

Men of the world laugh at Religion, and make a mock at the comforts of it; but Religion, a belief in God, a beholding

ing him in the face of Chriſt Jeſus, as reconciling the world unto himſelf, is neceſſary to deliver a man from the pain that the troubles of life would otherwiſe occaſion; this Religion alone can give peace in all the ſcenes of life, elevating the ſoul above the anxieties of human nature—and this religion is a fruitful tree; ſome of its fruits are,

1. Reſignation to the will of God.—This ſweetens the otherwiſe unpalatable cup of pain and diſappointment, it takes off the keen edge from affliction, a certainty of the Divine Government, and the end of it, through reſignation, brings forth patience under affliction; and by the experience of Divine goodneſs, fills the ſoul with immortal hope. Thoſe who know the chaſtening hand of an Almighty Father, or who behold the Captain of their Salvation placing them at a poſt of honour, that, like ſoldiers, they may manfully endure the fight of faith:—theſe know the ſweets of that reſignation which ariſeth from a knowledge of the Divine Governmen; theſe can teſtify the holy calmneſs of mind that it produces; how it levels the inquietude of the ſoul, and fills the mind; though encloſed in a tortured body or daſaſtrous ſituation;—with peace,—with joy,—with gratitude,—with Heaven.

2. Faith in God, and our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; produces love to God, becauſe he firſt loved us; and according to the ſtrength of our faith is the greatneſs of our love. The more we have of this love to the Father and the Son, the more perfect will be our obedience to their commands, the more energy will it give us in the performance of every duty. This Divine love is calculated to diffuſe joy and gladneſs through every ſituation of life we may be placed in: is it amongſt the wealthy and honourable, it gives us an opportunity of manifeſting our gratitude to the Author of all good, and of imitating his conduct who opens his hand and diffuſes bleſſings on his dependent creatures. Is poverty our lot?—Our Father appointed it; our elder brother and Sovereign Lord hath borne it; our heavenly Father will ſupport us under it: he is good, and we are unworthy of his tender mercies; let our love be manifaſted by our grateful dependance upon his paternal care.

3. This Holy Faith produces unfeigned humility; without it there is no genuine Chriſtianity: the croſs of Chriſt humbles the aſpiring independence of man; it lays before us our depravity, our weakneſs, our helpleſs eſtate, how utterly incapable we are of ourſelves to recover the image of God

God which we have loſt by tranſgreſſion. Sweet indeed are the fruits of humilty, it levels all the tormenting paſſions of the ſoul, and enables the believer to paſs through the ſtormy ſea of this life without murmur or complaint. With holy Job, in the midſt of affliction, we ſhall cry out, "Naked came I from my mother's womb." The conſcious ſenſe of our own unworthineſs will prevent our feeling trouble with intenſeneſs, it will blunt the edge of anxiety, and entirely prevent rage, anguiſh, and deſpair; and in the fiery trials that attend our journey through life, we ſhall have this conſoling reflection, that if we obtain the favour of God all the troubles that can befall us are not worthy of a murmur, and even they ſhall paſs away like the ſummer tempeſt, giving ſuperior luſtre by the paſſed ſtorm. It is thus that the belief in one Supreme and Almighty God, and Jeſus of Nazareth, the Son of his love, is calculated to produce ſuch diſpoſitions of mind and ſuch conſoling hopes as are fully capable of making the fleeting moments of time not only calm, but joyful, through the glorious conſequences that keep continually ariſing to view; like the aſcending hills, one above another, till the ſpiritual eye, though aided by all the powers of imagination, is loſt in the diſtant proſpect.

The goodneſs of our God has not left us to the powers of fancy to animate our faith, but on the contrary, paints the glowing ſcene before us with all the brilliancy of imagination, whilſt Truth, immortal Truth, guides the pencil with unerring preciſion, and then commands us by faith to make it our own: it bids us take a ſurvey of the promiſed glories, to realize them, that we may be ſupported by them under all the troubles of life, and on wings of faith ſoar high above all the afflictions to which human nature is ſubject. "In my Father's houſe," ſaith our Lord, "there are many manſions, if it were not ſo I would have told you."

The Redeemer of men did not come to earth on an errand of deception, he had dwelt in the boſom of the Father and was well acquainted with the manſions of glory; he has promiſed to come again and take us to this glory; yet, leſt we ſhould not be fully ſatisfied with that promiſe, but faint through uncertainty as we paſſed onward upon our journey, he has in the ſacred writings cauſed many of thoſe glories to be particularly marked out; with this hope beyond them, that the eye hath not ſeen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the glories that ſhall be revealed.

Here

Here below, riches, honours, and pleaſures are either ſhadows, or, like the ſummer brier, beautiful flowers ſurrounded by thorns which lacerate the hand that dares to gather them; not ſo the enduring riches, honours, and pleaſures which God hath prepared for them that love him, and hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; theſe ſhall not paſs away, they are not liable to the fluctuating viciſſitudes of human exiſtence, but are built on the promiſe of Jehovah, and have his unchangeable throne for their foundation.

In this life, a man to be reputed rich muſt have an houſe, yet this habitation is but tranſient; if the winds ſhake it not, if the earthquake does not overturn it, yet time ſhall undermine its foundations, the lofty roofs, the ſolid walls, and all its pompous decorations ſhall ſoon paſs away; if hiſtory records its name, the ſearching eye of the antiquarian ſhall ſearch for it in vain, its place ſhall not be found, oblivion, with all its gloomy horrors, ſhall cover the once frequented ſpot, whilſt Nature reaſſumes the domain that art had taken from her; not ſo the habitation we are promiſed by Chriſt, when our earthly houſe of this tabernacle is diſſolved; for then we ſhall have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, like the workmanſhip of Jehovah, in the ſun, moon, and ſtars, it is ſtrong, enduring; not like the ſhallow art of man, which builds a palace for a few years: the ravages of time cannot ſhake its fabric, nor all its viciſſitudes moulder away its immortal foundations.

But what is a houſe here below without poſſeſſions? With all the luxurioufneſs of art beſtowed upon it, without a garden or lands, it would be but an ornamented priſon. Man was not made for the ſolitary confines of ſtone walls, the world was made for him, earth is his habitation, and the lord of the univerſe cannot be ſatisfied without beholding his demeſnes:—but alas! theſe demeſnes muſt periſh—his inheritance ſtoops beneath the inclement ſky—the howling tempeſt overturns his labours and roots up his ſolid oaks—the lightning, thunder and rain, or the want of them, blaſt his nobleſt expectations, and overwhelm his inheritance in ruins; not ſo the inheritance that his Maker hath promiſed, that is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away; the earthquake or tempeſt connot injure it, the blight polluteth it not, ages deſtroy not its beauty, for God, the great giver of it is its preſerver, and time, which now mars inheritances, ſhall add, with every revolving age, freſh luſtre to the incorruptible poſſeſſion.

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To be eſteemed a great man now, it is thought neceſſary to have a town reſidence in that city which contains the palace of the king:—but oh, how poor, how mean is the habitation! it appears grand only by compariſon with the contemptible dwellings with which it is ſurrounded, or from the weakneſs of the being who erected it. How different from this is that city which is the peculiar reſidence of the Saints, that glorious city whoſe builder and maker is God, the walls thereof are like jaſper, and the materials of which the habitations are erected, bright, tranſparent, and dazzling, like the pureſt burniſhed gold: compariſon here doth not create imaginary beauty, but every houſe reflects glory upon all, and the whole beſpeaks the praiſe of the Divine Architect who planned, and the Almighty hand that finiſhed it.

This earth is liable to various changes, indeed ſo much ſo, that the viciſſitudes of life, are become proverbial amongſt men. But we look for an higher ſtate; a ſtate that cannot change, or if it doth, it ſhall be from glory to glory, riſing nearer and nearer continually to the perfection of Deity. The kingdom of God is a glorious and happy kingdom, where ſorrow and pain are not known, the cares of this mortal life are there forgotten, the laws are righteous and all the ſubjects happy. It is a kingdom firmly eſtabliſhed, no enemy can ſhake its throne or overturn its conſtitution. It is firmly fixed on the baſis of eternal love, and cannot be moved. Let us then, who are candidates for this kingdom, make our calling and election to it ſure, by loving and obeying Jehovah the Sovereign thereof, and placing the moſt unlimited confidence in his wiſdom, and goodneſs, and power.

Behold, ye ſons of men, ſome few of the bleſſings that attend the Chriſtian. Honour is deſirable among men; they ſearch after it as a jewel of ineſtimable value. But of how little value is all the earthly honour that can be heaped upon man compared with the honour that comes from God! Here a few mortal attendants may wait upon us, and perhaps deſpiſe the object they attend, obey us from fear or intereſt, and behind our backs hold up our follies and infirmities to ridicule: but at the hour of death behold the Chriſtian's awful pomp! an heavenly convoy awaits him to carry him to the Kingdom of Glory.—Behold ye ſons of pride, behold the poor deſpiſed beggar, Lazarus!—See him upborne on the wings of angels to the boſom of Abraham in the Paradiſe of God—what an honour is this! all the ſolemn pageantry of ſtate that waits upon the carcaſe of a Dives, com-

pared with this, is leſs worthy of notice than the yellow varniſh when contraſted with burniſhed gold; how it exalts the character of a Chriſtian! the pure undefiled ſons of the morning take pleaſure in waiting upon the heirs of ſalvation.

On earth, that man is honoured who is admitted into the royal preſence, and permitted to pay perſonal homage to mortal majeſty: but the Chriſtian ſoars above earthly courts and dying kings—Heaven's awful Majeſty he pants to view, and longs to proſtrate before the King of kings; with David he crieth out, "When ſhall I be admitted into the courts of the palace of my God."

The Chriſtian has felt the infirmities of human nature, and knows his liability to ſink beneath temptation; he therefore looketh forward with holy expectation to that period when temptation ſhall be no more; but he ſhall be in the hands of his heavenly Father, kept in unſullied purity till he ſhall again appear on earth to reign with his Lord.

The love of praiſe is in the boſom of every man, and in men of enlarged minds, perhaps, has always been the greateſt ſtimulus to action: with what fortitude have they endured hardſhips, with what patience have they borne adverſity, with what zeal have they purſued their object—to obtain the praiſe of men, the praiſe of a comparatively ſmall number of mankind, and that praiſe intermingled with ignorance, envy, jealouſy, hatred, and all the perverted paſſions of the human breaſt. But the Chriſtian has before him the approbation of his Creator, the high plaudit of the ſearcher of hearts, who ſhall before men and angels approve of his conduct with a "well done, good and faithful ſervant, enter into the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world." No envy will attend this approbation; a conſciouſneſs of the truth of it will raiſe eſteem in the breaſts of the angelic hoſts, whilſt the King of kings welcomes them with "Come ye bleſſed of my Father." Happy indeed the ſervant of God who has this approbation; a liſtening world ſhall behold him with reverence, whilſt the firſt-born ſons of God hail him, welcome to the manſions of glory.

Higher glories ſtill await them when their crucified Lord ſhall appear in all the glory of his Father to reign as ſovereign of the earth; for they having died in Chriſt ſhall riſe with him, ſee him as he is, and appear with him in all the radiant ſplendor of thoſe morning ſtars, the firſt-born ſons of God. Then ſhall they be the prieſts of the Moſt High, and their lips ſhall teach righteouſneſs to the ſons of men. Then

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ſhall they ſit, like Solomon, on glorious thrones, whilſt the nations flock to their footſtools to catch the wiſdom that floweth from their lips. They ſhall rule the kingdoms in righteouſneſs and create peace amongſt the nations of the earth. Then, through their miniſtration, ſhall univerſal joy pervade all peoples, and God, the immortal parent, ſhall cauſe the earth to bring forth its increaſe, he ſhall pour down his bleſſings upon mankind, and all the ends of the earth ſhall praiſe him.

Crowns are here too often obtained by treachery, and power unjuſtly got is too apt to be preſerved by acts of oppreſſion. The ſituation of a man implieth not his fitneſs for it: not ſo in that kingdom which we look to obtain, for, Jeſus, the great ſovereign thereof, knoweth the capacity of each, and it is he that will give a crown of righteouſneſs, that fadeth not away, to all that love his appearing; then will their power be fully eſtabliſhed in righteouſneſs, not liable to arts of deſigning traitors, nor ſubject to the miſconceptions of mankind—their thrones ſhall not be overturned, but ſhall overturn all their oppoſers till the end is anſwered for which they were eſtabliſhed, by the full ſubjection of the whole creation to the will of God.

But higher ſtill ſhall their glory ariſe, even far beyond the imagination of man to conceive, unaided by revelation. For thus ſaith the Lord, "To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me on my throne, even as I alſo overcame and am ſet down with my father on his throne." Aſtoniſhing thought! how high doth the ambition of a Chriſtian aſpire! unbounded by temporal thrones and the government of nations, it pants after the throne of God, and longeth to ſit with his Sovereign on the ſeat of dominion, a dignity as far beyond that of the monarchs of the Eaſt, as the glory of the lunar orb is exceeded by the ſplendor of meridian day.

Surely the conſideration of theſe honours that await the Chriſtian Believer is ſufficient to ſupport him under the little troubles of afflicting life—a life in which, notwithſtanding there is much evil, ſtill there is alſo much good, yea, a preponderating good, good that ſhould call forth continual gratitude. Let the men of the world be diſcontented and repine under the bounties of Providence; let not your hearts be troubled though a cloud ſhould be before you and your paths ſhould be darkened. You believe in Chriſt; he has ſealed his promiſes with his blood, that we may have a ſure ground for our hopes, a ſolid foundation on which our ex-

pectations may reſt, when we look forward for unceaſing pleaſures and continual joy. Independant of the glorious promiſes of which we have been ſpeaking, there are leſs delights held forth in the word of Divine truth, that there may be a ſuitable hope adapted to every diſpoſition and ſituation of man.

Are you in pain of body or diſtreſs of mind? You ſhall be delivered from pain, from ſorrow, from ſickneſs, from diſappointment, from evil tempers and from death; all inquietude ſhall be for ever gone; the racked mind and tortured body ſhall be no more; all ſhall be peace, calm ſerenity, meekneſs, gentleneſs and love; joy ſhall ariſe within, whilſt the ſmiles of peace ſhall grace the form divine.

Do you love to ſee ſplendor, dignity, and glory? You ſhall ſee the King in his beauty, Jeſus, attended by twenty thouſand thouſand of the angelic hoſt, in all the glory of his Father—you ſhall join his train—you ſhall behold his glory, and be like unto him.

Do you love the ſweetneſs of friendſhip, and pant for the ſight of them whom your ſoul loveth?—Jeſus is your friend and brother, your abſent friend; how often have you longed to behold him! How often have you anticipated the joyful meeting! How little and low are the meetings of earthly friends compared to the pleaſures of meeting with Jeſus! Love and gratitude ſhall then call forth every endearing affection of the ſoul, and melt it into all the extacy of love—to ſee Jeſus—him who created us—who died for us—who hath continually ſupported us under every trouble, and who ſhall then have delivered us from all our diſtreſſes. O my ſoul, where art thou? the reflection carries me beyond the powers of human language, and fills me with unutterable bliſs.

How often have we here read with admiration of the pity and fortitude of the Martyrs and Saints of God!---but there we ſhall know them---we ſhall liſten to the tale of paſt ages, and be filled with admiration at the providential hand of Deity, the ſaints of God, the prophets, the apoſtles, the martyrs, the patriarchs, will be our companions; we ſhall hear them recount the wonders of Divine love, and liſten with ſilent rapture to the extatic tale. What ſcenes wilt thou open to our minds, and how ſhall we be aſtoniſhed at this unravelling of ſuch a combination of events! Glory to the Higheſt will be our ſong, and obedience our delight.

Here we cannot gratify fully that principle of the human mind

mind that is formed for action: like Deity itself the soul of man is for ever moving: but O how unlike him in the pursuits which give it motion! But there we shall be made rulers over many things; there will be a variety calculated to give happiness, and a knowledge that shall yield wisdom, that may enjoy the active sphere, by giving that ability which shall enable the soul to fill it up aright. The capacity of man is unbounded as his thirst for it, and he shall then find the works of creation and providence are equally unbounded with his capacity and desires. How grovelling, therefore, must be their ambition who solely exercise themselves with the trifles of this life, and that have no enjoyments but such as are common to the brutes, born as they are to such high enjoyments, born for dominion, and yet contented with being slaves! But you, my dear Christian friends, let not your hearts be troubled at the vicissitudes of life, and the various afflictions to which it is exposed. Ye believe in God! ye likewise believe in the Lord Jesus Christ! Quickly will time pass away, and with it all your afflictions; then, in the mansions of bliss shall you hear the voice of uncreated harmony, and enjoy riches, honours, pleasures, and glories, in the presence of God and his Christ, ages without end. Amen. Amen.

SERMON

SERMON VI.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

GENESIS XLV. 3.

And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence.

THE history of Joseph and his brethren, notwithstanding it is a true history of facts that have really happened, was not written on account of the things themselves, but because of the important instruction it conveys to all who read it from that time to the present, as also through all succeeding ages till change shall be no more. It teacheth us, by striking facts, never to be cast down at adversity, nor ever to do injustice to those in our power, not knowing how soon the man who now sitteth on the pinnacle of prosperity may be shut up with the children of misery in the habitation of distress, or how soon the slave in the prison of adversity may be elevated to the throne of princes. We are likewise taught by the relation of facts, that Jehovah who sitteth at the helm of human affairs, knoweth how to bring about the most important purposes by those very ways which his enemies take to thwart his designs. On this thought I reflect with peculiar pleasure; Jehovah, my all wise Creator, hath a system for his conduct towards his creatures; vast, intricate, wonderful, glorious, a system that shall restore all his works to more than primæval perfection, and will accomplish all his good pleasure; the wrath or wickedness of his adversaries shall not obstruct the accomplishment of his purposes, and all their attempts to frustrate his designs, shall but serve to fulfill them. How remarkably was this made manifest in the case of Joseph whom God had appointed to be a Great Saviour

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to the Seed of Abraham, and to many nations a type of our bleſſed Lord, the Great Saviour of his people from their ſins, and through them all the nations of the earth.

God manifeſted himſelf unto Joſeph in a dream, and he ſaid unto his brethren " Hear, I pray you, this dream which " I have dreamed. For behold we were bending ſheaves in " the field, and lo, my ſheaf aroſe, and ſtood upright; and " behold your ſheaves ſtood round about, and made obeiſance " to my ſheaf." How doth the ſelfiſh pride of the human heart reſiſt all government but that of their own will! they can ſcarce bear a rival in the exerciſe of power much leſs can they bear an equal to be exalted to rule over them, even though by the ſpecial appointment of God. Joſeph by telling them his dream did not uſurp dominion, but only foretold that which ſhould come to paſs in the way of Providence; it would have been a time to reſiſt when he began to rule; fraternal affection ſhould have led them into a candid judgment, and true wiſdom ſhould have taught them to know that God could have accompliſhed his purpoſes in the future advancement of Joſeph, quite conſiſtently with the welfare of his brethren, not only ſo, but to have made their glory and happineſs dependant upon it.

Nothing more fully manifeſts the folly of mankind than their unbounded thirſt after dominion, and their envy at the merit of others. The brethren of Joſeph felt as men envious at the ſuperior merit of their brother, and hated him becauſe of the divine bleſſing; they could not bear that he, their younger brother, ſhould rule over them, and ſought a proper opportunity to prevent it. Jacob having large poſſeſſions of cattle, his ſons were his ſhepherds, and tended them at a diſtance from the vale of Hebron, where Jacob reſided; Joſeph and Benjamin being the youngeſt, ſtayed with their father. Jacob, anxious for his children's welfare, ſent Joſeph to enquire after them, no ſooner did they ſee him at a diſtance, but they cried out, " Behold this dreamer cometh;" and thy conſpired together to ſlay him; but overcome by the perſuaſion of Rueben, who ſought an opportunity to reſcue him from their wicked intentions, they caſt him into a pit, out of which they afterwards took him, and ſold him to a caravan of Iſhmaelite merchants, who were paſſing that way to go into Egypt.

When brought into Egypt, the Iſhmaelites ſold him unto Potiphar, an officer in the army of Pharoah, and captain of his guard. How eſtimable is integrity, when it ſprings from piety,

piety! it makes a man valuable in the eyes even of them who know not God; it leads them to obſerve the difference of the conduct between that man who feareth Jehovah, and him who feareth him not: true religion giveth a man an holy confidence, it calleth forth his induſtry, it maketh a man to be a calm, active member of ſociety; this was the caſe with Joſeph. The Lord was with him, and he was a proſperous man in the houſe of his maſter the Egyptian; and his maſter could but notice it, for he ſaw that the Lord was with him, and made all the work of his hands to proſper. This cauſed him to have a regard for Joſeph, and made him to ſhew that regard by outward acts; he promoted Joſeph to be the overſeer of his houſe and ſteward of his poſſeſſions. This was indeed the true end of religion. It was the leaven of piety fermenting the world. The maſter ſees the conduct of his ſervant, and is by it led to ſee the hand of Jehovah. Joſeph here treads in his father Jacob's ſteps, and has, by ſo doing, the bleſſing of the God of his father Jacob. The maſter ſees that the Lord is with Joſeph, and in conſequence he made him overſeer over his houſe and all that he had; and the Lord bleſſed the Egyptian for Joſeph's ſake, and the bleſſing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the houſe and in the field. Happy indeed is that maſter who has an upright, faithful believer for his ſervant; and happy that ſervant whoſe conduct is ſuch as to bring down the bleſſing of Jehovah upon his maſter's habitation; more bleſſed is he than the children of princes, for he is even now an inſtrument of communicating bleſſings; tied up by his ſituation from pouring forth from the horn of plenty with a liberal hand, he by his uprightneſs calleth down bleſſings from heaven, and giveth, by his conduct, a thouſand times more than he receiveth.

Joſeph was a goodly perſon, a handſome well proportioned man; and his miſtreſs, ſmitten with his beauty, forgetting the native modeſty of the female, not only longed for, but entreated his embraces. But he refuſed. The ſituation of Joſeph as houſe ſteward, placed him in the way of temptation, and gave his miſtreſs an opportunity to tempt his virtue to the utmoſt, and that by the ſtrongeſt paſſion of mankind; but ſuch is the energetic influence of true religion, that it enabled him to overcome the powerful temptation, and to reaſon with her on the ſtrong principles of gratitude and religion, to bring her back to the paths of virtue. "My maſter, ſaid he, knoweth not what is with me in the houſe; he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; in this houſe there is none greater than

I; he hath not kept back aught but thee, becauſe thou art his wife; how then can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?" So ſtrong are the paſſions of the children of Adam, when not controuled by the higher principles of piety, founded on the knowledge of the character of Jehovah, that like the raging tempeſt, they ſwell and beat upon all the puny bulwarks of reaſon and prudence, until they have ſwept away every veſtige of them. In vain did Joſeph reaſon and diſplay his maſter's love and his own ſervile condition. She ſtill intreated him day by day, but finding that ſhe could not ſhake his piety, watching for opportunity when all the men of the houſe were abſent, ſhe caught him by his garment, and ſaid, "Lie with me;" but he left his garment in her hand and fled. Then ſhe called the men of the houſe, and ſaid unto them, "See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice; and it came to paſs, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me and fled and got him out:" and ſhe laid up his garment by her until her Lord came home, when ſhe related to him the ſame fictious tale.

There is not any word more abuſed than the word Love. Love is a pure and holy emanation of the Deity; it partakes of his nature, and is only known to dwell in the boſom of the poſſeſſor, by the benign actions it produces; it is ever doing good to the beloved object, and the longeſt returns of ingratitude changeth not its nature; like Jehovah himſelf it is unchangeable. It manifeſts itſelf by kindneſs, gentleneſs, patience, meekneſs, forbearance, tenderneſs, and ever ſtriving to communicate, and almoſt creating opportunities of doing good; but love, human love, is a ſelfiſh paſſion, it is continually ſeeking gratification, it loveth the object for the ſake of ſelf, and ſeeks to do it good for its own enjoyment; unreturned or unregarded, it manifeſts its perverted nature by hatred, malice, and revenge, as in the wife of Potiphar; when the poſſeſſor of it cannot accompliſh his purpoſes, willingly would he ſacrifice the honour, character, and even life of the beloved object. "Behold," ſaid ſhe, to her huſband, behold the Hebrew ſlave which thou haſt brought to us, came in unto me to mock me, and it came to paſs, as I lift up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me and fled out."

It is not to be wondered at that Joſeph's maſter ſhould be wroth with him, and unheard, condemn his faithful ſervant

to a prison, where the king's prisoners were bound; doubtless, he was ordered to close confinement, and to be heavily fettered, for it is said by the Psalmist, "his feet they hurt with fetters, he was laid in iron." But even there, "The Lord was with Joseph and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison, and whatsoever they did there he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand, because the Lord was with him, and that which he did the Lord made it to prosper." Happy Joseph, who could thus arise above slavery and imprisonment! Truly it may be said of the righteous man, all that he doeth shall prosper." It is not with Joseph as it is with too many of the great men of the world, the place did not make the man great. But the man was good, and through his piety, whether he was a shepherd in the fields, a steward of a palace, a prisoner, goaler, or prime minister, he was always great, for he served Jehovah, and his blessing is always on them that fear his name.

"And it came to pass after these things, that the chief butler, and chief baker of the king of Egypt, had offended their Lord, and Pharaoh was wroth with them, and he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound, and the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them, and they continued a season in ward. And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night; and Joseph came in unto them in the morning and looked upon them, and behold they were sad, and he asked them, wherefore look ye so sadly to day? And they said unto him, we have dreamed a dream, and there is not an interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, do not interpretations belong to God; tell me them, I pray you." How concise, and yet how beautifully did Joseph take off their attention from himself, who was about to interpret their dreams, and lead them to the God of Israel, who had given the dreams, and was by him about to give their interpretation; he was indeed a wise man, for he was intimately acquainted with the fountain of wisdom, and dwelt under a constant sense of the favour of his God. "And the chief butler said unto him, in my dream, behold a vine was before me, and in the vine three branches, and it was as though it budded, and the blossoms shot forth, and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes; and Pharaoh's

Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and preſſed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. And Joſeph ſaid unto him, this is the interpretation of it. The three branches are three days, yet, within three days ſhall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and reſtore thee unto thy place, and thou ſhalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner, when thou waſt his butler. But think on me when it ſhall be well with thee, and ſhew kindneſs I pray thee unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this houſe. For, indeed, I was ſtolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here alſo have I done nothing that they ſhould put me into this dungeon." Alas, poor Joſeph! the bitterneſs of adverſity brought home to thy wounded heart, thy domeſtic fire-ſide, thine aged parent, thy beloved Benjamin, and thy hard hearted, envious, cruel brethren. If proſperity in the houſe of Potiphar had made thee forget thy father's houſe, adverſity again brought every paſt endearment to recollection, and made thee, o man of God, become a ſuppliant to an Egyptian priſoner; but, alas! the butler forgat Joſeph: no doubt he promiſed to requite thy kindneſs and thy wiſdom, but affliction paſt—the inſtrument of ſoothing it was buried in oblivion; men live for themſelves, none but the man of God liveth for ſociety, and in the day of proſperity delights in recollecting and rewarding paſt obligations.

"When the chief baker ſaw that the interpretation was good, he ſaid unto Joſeph, I alſo was in my dream, and behold, I had three white baſkets on my head, and in the uppermoſt baſket there was all manner of baked meats for Pharaoh, and the birds did eat them out of the baſket upon my head." The interpretation of good to one man, leads others to try their fortune in the ſame lottery, though but few prizes, yet every one hopes to be a gainer, and meets more than double diſappointment from his neighbour's ſucceſs, compared with his own miſchance. This was the caſe of Pharaoh's unhappy baker, he had heard the promiſed reſtoration of the butler, and hoped to meet with a like promiſe. How dreadful muſt have been his diſappointment, when Joſeph ſaid, "This is the interpretation of thy dream. The three baſkets are three days, yet, within three days ſhall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and ſhall hang thee on a tree, and the birds ſhall eat thy fleſh from off thee." Happy is that man who expecteth not worldly bleſſings, for he can never be diſappointed. Happy, thrice happy the be-

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liever, who ſeeth the hand of Jehovah ordering all things, and is contented that he ſhall appoint his ſtation, his ſupport, his comforts, his trials, and the length or ſhortneſs of his journey; in every ſituation of life that man is at home, he is, indeed, the ſoldier of Chriſt, continually liſtening for the word of command.

The butler was delivered from his priſon, and for two years forgot Joſeph. God, as a father, chaſteneth thoſe whom he loveth, that being tried in the furnace of affliction, they may come thereout more ſeparated and purified from ſelf and pride, and all the baſe alloy that intermingles with the ſpirit of that man who hath not known adverſity. The child of God may ſuffer long, but the eye of his heavenly Father is upon him, he ſeeth his affliction, and liſteneth to all his cries, he looketh down upon him in his low eſtate, and will, if requiſite, ſhake an empire to its foundation, but that he will work his deliverance. Joſeph, the innocent, uncomplaining Joſeph, was forgotten for two whole years, when Pharaoh dreamed two dreams, and in the morning his ſpirit was troubled, and he ſent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wiſe men thereof, and told them his dreams but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh. O how vain is human wiſdom, with all the fooliſh pretenſions of weak or wicked men, to the knowledge of the black art, to explain the myſterious revelations of God! He that revealeth all things that are to come to paſs alone can enlighten the mind to expound that which he hath revealed; none of them could interpret the dreams unto Pharaoh. Egypt, at that time renowned for arms, for arts, for commerce, and for ſcience, could not produce a man that could explain a dream. The monarch of the Eaſt muſt be troubled, and all the wiſdom of the Eaſt cannot ſpeak peace unto him. What awful attention muſt have ran through the court of Pharaoh, and from thence to the city, the country, and through the nation. The butler, who had long forgotten Joſeph, is; by the conſternation of the court, brought to remember his former comforter. "This day, ſaid he to Pharaoh, do I remember my faults, Pharaoh was wroth with his ſervant, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's houſe, both me and the chief baker. And there was with us a young man, an Hebrew, ſervant to the captain of the guard, and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams, to each man according to his dream he did interpret; and it ſoon came to paſs, as he interpreted to us, ſo it was; me he

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reſtored to mine office, and him he hanged. Then Pharaoh ſent and called Joſeph, and they brought him haſtily out of the dungeon, and he ſhaved, and changed his raiment and came in unto Pharaoh, and Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard ſay of thee, that thou canſt underſtand a dream to interpret it. And Joſeph anſwered Pharaoh, ſaying, it is not in me. God ſhall give Pharaoh an anſwer of peace." How pioufly doth the humbled Joſeph ſpeak; I never can read it without being humbled in my own ſpirit. It is not in me; God ſhall give Pharaoh an anſwer of peace. Fit us, holy Father, for thy work, that in all we do or ſay, we may aſcribe glory unto thee.

"And Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, I ſtood upon the bank of the river, and behold there came up out of the river, ſeven kine, fat fleſhed, and well favoured, and they fed in a meadow; and behold ſeven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favoured, and lean fleſhed, ſuch as I never ſaw in all the land of Egypt for badneſs, and the lean and ill favoured kine did eat up the firſt ſeven fat kine, and when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them, but they were ſtill ill favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke.

"And I ſaw in my dream, and behold, ſeven ears came up on one ſtalk, full and good; and behold ſeven ears, withered, thin, and blaſted with the eaſt wind, ſprang up after them, and the thin ears devoured the ſeven good ears: and I told this unto the Egyptians, but none could declare it unto me."

And Joſeph ſaid, the dreams of Pharaoh are one; God hath ſhewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. The ſeven good kine are ſeven years, and the ſeven good ears are ſeven years: and the ſeven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them, are ſeven years, and the ſeven empty ears, blaſted with the eaſt wind, ſhall be ſeven years of famine. This is the thing which I have ſpoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he ſheweth unto Pharaoh. Behold, there come ſeven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. And there ſhall ariſe after them, ſeven years of famine, and all the plenty ſhall be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine ſhall conſume the land, and the plenty ſhall not be known in the land, by reaſon of the famine following it, for it ſhall be very grievous; and for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice, it is becauſe the thing is eſtabliſhed by God, and God will ſhortly bring it to paſs. Now, therefore,

therefore, let Pharaoh look out a man diſcreet and wiſe, and ſet him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the ſeven plenteous years; and let them gather all the food of thoſe good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh; and let them keep food in the cities, and that food ſhall be ſtore to the land againſt the ſeven years famine which ſhall be in the land of Egypt, that the land periſh not through the famine: And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his ſervants. And Pharaoh ſaid, Can we find ſuch a one as this, a man in whom is the ſpirit of God. And Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, Forſamuch as God has ſhewed thee all this, there is none ſo diſcreet and wiſe as thou art. Thou ſhalt be ruler over my houſe, and according to thy word ſhall all my people be ruled, only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, See I have ſet thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joſeph's hand, and arrayed him in a veſture of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck, and he made him to ride in the ſecond chariot which he had, and they cried before him, Bow the knee, and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt: and Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, I am Pharaoh, without thee ſhall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."

What believer in the truth of Divine Revelation that is well acquainted with this hiſtory of Joſeph, can ever be mad enough to attempt to vindicate his own character? With holy fortitude did he ſuffer under a falſe accuſation: no reproaches do we hear againſt his falſe accuſer; but, like the Son of God before the Jewiſh Sanhedrim, he anſwered not a word. The ſudden elevation of Joſeph, and the cauſe of it, muſt have occaſioned much re-examination of all his paſt conduct, and caſt a ray of divine glory over his ſuffering virtue. Worthy indeed was he to rule, who, by his wiſdom and uprightneſs, could ſo make known his integrity of conduct, as that he ſtood at no time in need of exculpation. Be it my motto; be it yours; be it the motto of every Chriſtian. God defend us! What have we to do with the approbation of mankind? Let us approve ourſelves in the ſight of God, and he will, in his own good time, cauſe us to be approved of before the eyes of mankind, then will unjuſt aſperſions be made manifeſt, and the uprightneſs of our conduct will burſt forth, like the bright ſhining of the ſun through the miſty vapour,

vapour, and the enemies who hated and reproached us ſhall bow the knee and do us reverence, with ſolemn veneration.

Pharaoh appears in the character of Creation's univerſal ſovereign, he looks not back to all the ſay ſo's and falſe accuſations of mankind: but he at once enters into the characters of men, and rewards Joſeph according to merit; ſo ſhall it be at the coming of Chriſt Jeſus of Nazareth, who will enter into the characters of his ſaints, and reward them according to merit; the ſons of men ſhall own the juſtice of his appointments, and proclaim, Bow the knee before his firſt-born ſons.

How tranſient are human ſtates! Joſeph, this day the beloved ſon of a wealthy parent, dwelling in his father's habitation and being the comfort of his heart; to-morrow behold him ſold as a ſlave into a ſtrange land. See him this day ſteward and ruler over the palace and ſervants of a prince; ſee him on the morrow unjuſtly accuſed, and caſt into priſon: behold him with his eye caſt down, his legs fettered, and humbled to the duſt, and all his thoughts mournfully reflecting upon his cruel degraded ſtate. This hour behold him in his priſon cloaths, his eye ſad, his heart heavy, the ways of the footſteps of Divine Providence ſhadowed over with clouds and darkneſs: behold him the next hour bleſſed with the ſmiles of a wife and mighty monarch, adorned with all the outward decoration of human grandeur, whilſt the greateſt nation of the earth owns the juſtneſs of his exaltation, and liſtens with attention for his commands. O hope! though thou forſakeſt the boſoms of all the reſt of mankind, thy throne ſhould be erected in the heart of the believer, for he knoweth that Jehovah ruleth, that although his paths may be in the whirlwind, and his footſteps in the great deep, yet he holdeth the reigns of government, and ordereth all the concerns of human life according to the counſel of his own will.

What a wonderful chain of circumſtances attended the promotion of Joſeph! Had there been but one link wanting, the whole would have been deſtroyed. Had not Joſeph noticed the evil conduct of his brethren, they would not have hated him: If they had not hated him, he would not have been ſold for a ſlave. If Potiphar had not purchaſed him, his wife would never have been ſmitten with his beauty; if ſhe had not unjuſtly accuſed him, he would not have been caſt into priſon. If the butler and the baker had not been impriſoned, he could not have interpreted their dreams, nor Pharaoh's,

nor

nor have been promoted over Egypt, nor saved the lives of millions, nor would the posterity of Abraham have gone into Egypt, as Jehovah had foretold, nor would a numberless variety of the gracious promises of God been accomplished; truly, our God doth, indeed, turn the curse into a blessing, he overuled the wickedness of man, and by it saved many nations from being destroyed by famine, and, indeed, in saving the seed of Abraham, he saved the world.

"The seven years of plenty came to pass, as Joseph had foretold, and he stored up the produce of the fields in the cities which they surrounded; so wonderful was the production of nature, that he gathered corn like sand, in such prodigious quantities, that he ceased to number the amount of it. The seven years of famine followed, and dreadfully severe it was in all the countries surrounding Egypt; but in Egypt, through the providence of Joseph, there was bread, and when the stores saved by the people were expended, the people cried unto Pharaoh for bread, and Pharaoh said unto the Egyptians, go unto Joseph, and what he saith unto you do." It is but just here to observe the beneficial effects of good government. Egypt, the granary of the world, would have been famished, had not the commerce of the people been partially restrained; had it been wholly restrained, the neighbouring nations would have been destroyed, and vast quantities of that corn which was the gift of God for the benefit of mankind at large, would have uselessly perished; but by treasuring up the exceedings of the years of plenty, and permitting the commercial industry of the people to be freely exercised with the remainder, Egypt was enriched, the nations blessed, and God glorified by his bounty to his creatures. The mass of mankind must be governed to be happy, and happy are they if their governors rule over them in the fear of the Lord.

Though the land of Canaan was, in after ages, very productive in corn, in the days of Jacob, it appears to have been chiefly pasturage. They soon, therefore, felt the effects of the famine, and Jacob said unto his sons, "Why do ye look one upon another? Behold, I have heard there is corn in Egypt, get you down thither, and buy for us from thence, that we may live and not die." Jacob well knew the faithfulness of God, and that the promises he had made of the seed of the woman coming from his loins should, in the fulness of time, be accomplished, and yet he doth not say to his children, you are the chosen of the Lord, have but patience

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" for a little time, the windows of heaven ſhall be opened, and bread rained upon you ſooner than you ſhall periſh—No! the good old Patriarch well knew that although Jehovah could do any thing, yet he chooſes rather to give to the diligent hand his bleſſing. Why do you look upon one another? Perhaps they began to deſpair. The fodder is gone, we have not food for our cattle, they will ſoon die, and we whither, ſhall we go? Perhaps they began to look with evil eyes upon each other; or, if it had not come to this, as yet their minds began to be humbled, they felt the dependence of their ſituation. Faſting will pull down the lofty thoughts of man, and for the time lay his proudeſt boaſting in the duſt; when famine comes with all its ghaſtly horrors, the tottering knees ſcarce ſupport the ſkin-covered ſkeleton. " Why do ye look upon one another," ſaid the good old Jacob, " Behold I have heard that there is corn in Egypt, cheer up your ſpirits, my ſons, if God our Creator has with-held the bleſſings of the earth from us, he has poured out with a liberal hand to Egypt; expect not enjoyment without labour, ariſe, go down to Egypt and buy corn. Why ſhould man deſpair? the God of all fleſh feedeth the ravens, and provideth food for man. This day another labours and we partake of his repaſt; to-morrow it is our turn to labour, and invite them to the meal. The God of all fleſh unites ſociety by their mutual wants, and by it giveth the greateſt ſhare of bleſſings to him that is moſt diligent in procuring them.

And the ſons of Iſrael came into the land of Egypt to purchaſe corn, and Joſeph was the governor of the land, and he it was that ſold to all the people of the land. And Joſeph's brethren came and bowed down themſelves before him with their faces to the earth. When Joſeph ſaid to his brethren, " behold my ſheaf aroſe and ſtood upright, and behold your ſheaves aroſe and ſtood round about, and made obeiſance to my ſheaf." Had he explained it by ſaying, Ye ſhall willingly come to me, rejoice in my proſperity, and with pleaſure reverence my dignity, would they have believed him? Would they not have called him an aſpiring fool, an abandoned liar; and ſwore ſooner to ſuffer any evils than to have permitted him to rule over them, or than they would pay him any homage? Had good old Jacob ſaid to them, My ſons, you ſee the dreadful effects of the famine; but Egypt is a foreign country, their cuſtoms are different from ours, can you bend your minds willingly to ſubmit to any thing the governor of it may impoſe? doubtleſsly they would have

anſwered yes ; but had he ſaid, Your brother Joſeph is governor, you cannot buy corn there unleſs you homage him for your ſuperior, would they have done it? I think not, but have anſwered, we will ſtarve firſt, we will not go down. This is the true ſpirit of the Jews ; they will ſooner ſuffer the bittereſt deaths rather than acknowledge Jeſus to be the Meſſiah. Upon the Continent many have choſe whipping rather than to pronounce the name of Jeſus, although it is a common name amongſt them, ſignifying Saviour, or Reſtorer, and when they have been at laſt forced to pronounce it, they have ſpit after it, to ſhew their abhorrence of the name. There is not any thing in heaven, earth, or hell, they ſo much hate as the name of Jeſus of Nazareth. So did the brethren of Joſeph hate him. Was he not innocent, did he not love them? Yes! but he reproved them. Tell a falſehood of a bad man and he may forgive you, but tell of his evil deeds and you forfeit his eſteem for ever ; all men curſe the liar, and yet not any who know not God love the truth—They love to hear the truth of their neighbours, but themſelves they love to deceive, and hope by it to deceive others. This was the caſe with the Jewiſh nation, our Lord teſtified before his Father, and before the nation, that the deeds of his brethren were evil ; this occaſioned their hatred towards the Son of God, and made them unintentionally fulfill the prophecy concerning him, that he ſhould be a man whom the nation deſpiſed and rejected, a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief. But as his viſage was marred more than any man's, and his form more than the ſons of men, ſo ſhall he ſprinkle many nations : the kings ſhall ſhut their mouths at him, for that which has not been told them ſhall they ſee ; and that which they had not heard ſhall they conſider. Thus ſaith the Lord, the Redeemer of Iſrael, and his holy one, to him whom man deſpiſeth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a ſervant of rulers kings ſhall ſee and ariſe, princes alſo ſhall worſhip, becauſe of the Lord that is faithful. I have propoſed this queſtion, has there ever been any man whom the Jewiſh nation abhorreth but Jeſus of Nazareth? I know of no one, not even of all their wicked kings and falſe prophets, although one of them coſt them the lives of 580,000 men, and, indeed, almoſt deſtroyed the name of the Jewiſh nation ; ſo that it might be ſaid, that from his time began their deſpair of ever regaining their own land ; yet his name is never mentioned with that contempt which they affix to the name of Jeſus : and yet Jeſus never

never deſtroyed them, but he healed the ſick and wrought numerous miracles in their favour, and to this day they do not attempt to deny it.

Joſeph's brethren never thought to aſk any favour of him, his name they deteſted, and delivered his perſon into the hands of ſtrangers: but God knew how to make them bow the knee before him. He ſent famine amongſt them. Wonderful the effects of famine! the ſtrength faileth, and the ſoul becomes depreſſed; bread we muſt have, or our life is gone. This ſhall be one of the great means in the hands of God, to keep in ſubjection the nations to Jeſus, during his millenial reign: no rain ſhall come upon all the nations of the earth who ſend not their annual deputies with homage and tribute to Jeruſalem—no rain, no corn, the earth will not yield her fruits, famine enſues, and awful deſolation ſhall humble the haughty ſpirit of man.

God knew how to break the ſtaff of bread among the Egyptians, though fertiliſed by the Nile, as well as in the land of Canaan, which depended upon the ſhowers from heaven. The Egyptians cry to Pharaoh for food. "Go to Joſeph," ſaid he. So now, when the ſons of men are in diſtreſs, and cry to God, the Univerſal Parent. "Go to Jeſus," ſaith he, "look unto him ye children of diſtreſs." All ye remote peoples of the earth looked unto him and be ſaved. Every knee will he make to bow in homage, and every tongue ſwear allegiance to the name of Jeſus. Nothing can be more diſagreeable to his enemies than the thoughts of this; but Jehovah hath ſworn, and ſhall he not accompliſh? Every knee, whether Jew or Gentile, ſhall be conſtrained to reverence him whom the Creator delighteth to honour, and every tongue ſhall confeſs his goodneſs to the glory of God the Father.

"And Joſeph ſaw his brethren and he knew them, but made himſelf ſtrange unto them, and ſpoke roughly unto them. Whence come ye? And they ſaid from the land of Canaan to buy food: but he ſaid unto them, ye are ſpies, to ſee the nakedneſs of the land ye are come." Doubtleſs they thought this mighty man of Egypt a ſtrange fellow, and had many lofty thoughts at the perſonal affront he put upon them: had we come to beg his corn, he might have been ſo rough and imperious; but when we come as cuſtomers to purchaſe it, he might have been more civil: but they were hungry, and famine humbled their language; they wanted food, and

it would not do to ſpeak raſhly to him, who alone could ſupply their wants. Happy the man who is ſo humbled as to be enabled to manage his tongue; happier ſtill, if the thoughts of his heart are brought into ſubjection.

"You are ſtrangers," ſaid Joſeph, you are ſpies, you are come down from the land of Canaan to ſpy out the barrenneſs of our country;" and they ſaid unto him, "Nay, my Lord, but to buy food are thy ſervants come, we are all one man's ſons, we are true men, thy ſervants are no ſpies: and he ſaid unto them, Nay, but to ſee the nakedneſs of the land are ye come. And they ſaid, thy ſervants are twelve brethren, the ſons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngeſt is this day with our father, and one is not. And Joſeph ſaid unto them, That is it I ſpake unto you, ſaying ye are ſpies. Hereby ye ſhall be proved: by the life of Pharaoh, ye ſhall not go forth hence, except your youngeſt brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye ſhall be kept in priſon that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you, or elſe, by the life of Pharaoh, ſurely ye are ſpies. And he put them all together into ward three days."

By all this, who would not ſuppoſe that Joſeph had not ſome ſpite againſt his brethren, and was fully reſolved to revenged himſelf upon them for their former cruelty? On the third day he ſeemed to relent, and ſent for them again, and ſaid to them, "This do and live; I will not entirely ſtarve you, for I fear God. If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the houſe of your priſon: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houſes: but bring your youngeſt brother unto me, ſo ſhall your words be verified, and ye ſhall not die."

How wiſely did Joſeph work upon their paſſions, ſo as to bring home their former crime to their minds, and cauſe them to ſtand ſelf-condemned. There is no need for an accuſer when God, by his providential dealings, bringeth a man to the knowledge of himſelf; guilt and its attendant horrors, then harrow up the ſoul, and every thought accuſes and condemns. The man ſitteth in judgment upon his paſt life, and awfully ſevere is the ſentence that he paſſes. "And they ſaid one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh of his ſoul when he beſought us, and we would not hear, therefore is this diſtreſs come upon us. And Reuben anſwered them, ſaying, Spake I not unto you, ſaying, do not ſin againſt the child: and ye would not

not hear. Therefore behold alſo his blood is required. And they knew not that Joſeph underſtood them, for he ſpoke unto them by an interpeter."

Thus God acts by man; he does not ſpeak immediately, but by his providences, and bringeth man to the recollection of his guilt, and to the open confeſſion of it, crying out with the publican, Lord, have mercy upon me a ſinner. Joſeph had now brought his brethren to the acknowledgment of their guilt, he carries on the ſcene till they by mutual recrimination make known to him who is the moſt guilty. Little did they think of the feelings of Joſeph; he was touched with their infirmities, he ſaw the evil of their nature, and was determined to work in them a radical cure. Judgment was his ſtrange work; it forced him to turn himſelf about and weep. He then returned to them again, communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

"Then Joſeph commanded to fill their ſacks with corn, and to reſtore every man's money into his ſack, and to give them proviſion for the way. They had not got far upon their journey, when opening his ſack to give his aſs provender, one of them found his money: and he ſaid unto his brethren, my money is reſtored, and lo! it is even in my ſack, and their hearts failed, and they were afraid, ſaying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?" Dreadfully frightened indeed, to go down into Egypt to buy corn, and there to be taken for ſpies, to pay for that corn, and find their money in their ſacks, and perhaps to be purſued and taken up for thieves, or when their brother returned with them to be all ſeized, and either put to death or ſold for ſlaves.

Arrived at home, they acquainted their father with the rough treatment they had received from the Lord of Egypt. "He took us for ſpies, and would have that we came to ſearch out the barrenneſs of the country. It was in vain we denied it; in vain we declared our integrity, relating to him all our family circumſtances; he impriſoned us, and when he ſet us free, he retained Simeon in cuſtody, until we ſhould bring our youngeſt brother, Benjamin, down to confirm, by his appearance, the truth of our ſtatement, and then he would deliver Simeon to us again, and permit us to traffic in the land." They then opened their ſacks, and to their great aſtoniſhment, every man's money was found in his ſack; fear and horror ſeized them, Simeon, a priſoner, and by

ſome

ſome unaccountable circumſtances, all the money which they had paid for their corn returned. Doubtleſs they thought the Lord of Egypt will only know the money was not paid, he will not be acquainted with our integrity, we ſhall be ſuppoſed to be crafty knaves, Simeon will be ill treated, and when we return for corn, we ſhall be puniſhed for villainy.

Their aged parent ſees their diſtreſs, but parental tenderneſs for his abſent child is only increaſed by their affliction. "Me have ye bereaved; you have lopped off the branches from my withered trunk. Joſeph is not, and Simeon is not, and will ye take Benjamin away? All theſe things are againſt me." Poor old man! all thy fair expectations appear to be blaſted, the ſtorm ſeemed to pelt thy once happy habitation, thy decayed body ſeemed to have all its props taking away, and to be about to ſink into the grave, deſerted, comfortleſs and alone. When that which is our preſent pride is cut off, and all our future hope withered, what is man?

"And Reuben ſpake unto his father, ſlay my two ſons if I bring him not to thee; deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him unto thee again." Poor conſolation this to the good old man, to be permitted to ſlay his grand children becauſe he had loſt his child. Educated in the tempeſt, hardened by the inclemency of the weather, Reuben's ſoul ſeems to have poſſeſſed but little of the tender affections; guided by the impulſe of the moment, he appears to have been equally ready to do good or evil. All alive to the voice of miſery, his utmoſt deſire was to relieve it by any means, juſt or unjuſt; equally alive to the impulſe of his paſſions, his utmoſt deſire was to gratify them; in the ways of virtue unſtable as water; he never excelled. The man whoſe principles are not firmly eſtabliſhed upon the conduct of God, he who is not guided by motives ſuperior to the feelings of the fleſh, will never attain any great height of virtue: his brighteſt actions will be like the dazzling lightning which aſtoniſhes and deſtroys, whilſt his common walk of life is grovelling, if not injurious.

"The famine was ſore in the land, the corn they had brought from Egypt was expended, they began to feel the want of bread, and their father ſaid unto them, go again, buy us a little food: but Judah ſaid, The man did ſolemnly proteſt unto us, ſaying, ye ſhall not ſee my face except your brother be with you. If thou wilt ſend our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food; but if thou wilt not ſend him we will not go down, for the man ſaid

ſaid unto us, ye ſhall not ſee my face except your brother be with you. And Iſrael ſaid, wherefore dealt ye ſo ill with me as to tell the man ye had a brother? And they ſaid the man aſked us ſtraitly of our ſtate, and of our kindred, ſaying, Is your father yet alive, have ye another brother? and we anſwered him accordingly: Could we certainly know that he would ſay, Bring your brother down? And Judah ſaid unto Iſrael his father, Send the lad with me, and we will ariſe and go, that we may live and not die, both we and thou, and alſo our little ones: I will be ſurety for him, of my hand ſhalt thou require him. If I bring him not unto thee, and ſet him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever. For except we had lingered, ſurely now we had returned this ſecond time."

How rational, manly and perſuaſive is the ſpeech of Judah! it had the deſired effect, and the good affectionate old man ſaid, "If it muſt be ſo now, do this, take advice, ſoften the roughneſs of the Lord of Egypt with a preſent, do him homage, make an acknowledgment of his ſuperiority, and gain his favour by ſhewing your dependence upon him. Take of the beſt fruits of the land in your veſſels, a little balm, and a little honey, ſpices, myrth, nuts and almonds, and take double money in your hand and the money that was brought again in the mouths of your ſacks, carry it again in your hand, peradventure it was an overſight. Take alſo your brother, and ariſe, go again unto the man, and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may ſend away your other brother and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

What ſtrange ideas had the good old Patriarch of his beſt earthly friend! Little did he think that the man whoſe temper he ſought to mollify was at that time taking much pains to make him a joyful parent of virtuous children; that his hoary hairs might deſcend to the grave crowned with joy and full of peace. Juſt ſuch ideas have the children of men of their beſt friend, Jeſus the Saviour. They behold his rough treatment of them in all the croſs ſcenes of providence, but they behold not his kind compaſſion, and the tender ſympathy of his heart; in their higheſt ſufferings he renders them leſs than they deſerve, and then only afflicts that he may humble the proud imagination of their heart, and ſubdue every lofty thought into obedience to his will.

Well, down to Egypt they again go, and once more ſtand with Benjamin their brother before Joſeph, who bids his houſe

houſe ſteward kill and make ready that they may dine with him. "And he brought Simeon out unto them, and brought them into Joſeph's houſe, and gave them water to waſh their feet, and he gave their aſſes provender: and when Joſeph came home they brought the preſent which was in their hand into the houſe, and bowed themſelves to him unto the earth. And he aſked of their welfare, and ſaid, "Is your father well, the old man of whom ye ſpake? Is he yet alive? And they anſwered, Thy ſervant our father is in good health; he is yet alive, and they bowed down their heads and made obeiſance. And he lift up his eyes and ſaw his brother Benjamin, his mother's ſon, and ſaid, Is this your younger brother of whom ye ſpake unto me; and he ſaid, God be gracious unto thee my ſon. And Joſeph made haſte, for his bowels yearned upon his brother, and he ſought where to weep, and he entered into his chamber and wept there. And he waſhed his face, and went out and refrained himſelf, and ſaid ſet on bread."

There is ſomething peculiarly beautiful in this part of the hiſtory of Joſeph, it ſhews his character in a moſt affecting and amiable point of light. Neither adverſity or proſperity had deſtroyed his fraternal love; his whole ſoul melted over his brother, prudence not permitting him to pour forth his affections till he had tried if his brethren loved Benjamin, and if affliction had brought them to that union that is ſo deſireable in a family. The man who has not ſocial affection may talk of the tenderneſs of his heart, but his actions give the lie to his words, and cauſe him to ſtand condemned from his own lips. Whenever I ſee a family of children united in love to each other, always anxious to manifeſt it by kind actions and mutual forbearance, ſhould they have many and great failings, yet I am confident that I then behold a family who have ſtrong ſtamina of virtue, which if called forth, would make them ornaments to ſociety, a glory to their Maker, a mutual ſupport to each other; ſuch a family might put fortune's roughеſt frowns at defiance, and ſmile amidſt the ſcorn, reproach and contempt of mankind.

Dinner time came, and Joſeph arranged them all according to their ages, the eldeſt firſt and the youngeſt laſt; and the men wondered and were aſtoniſhed, they could not account for it. It was all enchanted ground! He then ſent meſſes to each of them, but to Benjamin a meſs of honour, five times as much as the reſt, being determined to call forth all the envy of their hearts if any was left, and they drank and

and were merry with him. And he commanded the ſteward of his houſe, ſaying, " Fill the mens ſacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his ſack's mouth, and put my cup, the ſilver cup, in the ſack's mouth of the youngeſt, and his corn money." And he did according as Joſeph had ſpoken, and when the morning was light the men were ſent away, they and their aſſes.

Doubtleſs they went merrily on, anticipating the pleaſures of home and the joys of their father's heart at the ſight of his beloved Benjamin. The good treatment they had experienced, ſo contrary to what they expected, muſt have given them a more than common elevation of ſpirit.—When on a ſudden Joſeph's ſteward overtakes them and ſays, " Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good, has not my lord treated you as friends, has he not returned you the money which you brought to purchaſe corn ; are you ſtill ſo covetous as to ſteal his ſilver cup, out of which he divineth ? And they ſaid unto him, wherefore ſaith my Lord theſe words ? God forbid that thy ſervants ſhould do according to this thing. Behold, the money which we found in our ſacks mouths we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan ; how then ſhould we ſteal out of thy Lord's houſe ſilver or gold ; with whomſoever of thy ſervants it is found let him die, and we will be my Lord's bondſmen. And he ſaid, now let it be according to your words, he with whom it is found ſhall be my ſervant, and ye ſhall be blameleſs. Then they ſpeedily took down every man his ſack to the ground, and opened every man his ſack. And he ſearched, and he began at the eldeſt and he left off at the youngeſt, and the cup was found in Benjamin's ſack. Then they rent their cloathes and laded every man his aſs, and returned to the city."

" And Judah and his brethren came to Joſeph's houſe (for he was yet there) and they fell before him on the ground. Joſeph addreſſed them roughly. What deed is this that you have done ? Did you not ſuppoſe that a man like me could certainly divine ? But Judah modeſtly, yet boldly comes forward and ſaid, what ſhall we ſay unto my Lord ? what ſhall we ſpeak ? or how ſhall we clear ourſelves ? God hath found out the iniquity of thy ſervants, behold we are my Lord's ſervants, both we and he alſo with whom the cup is found.—God forbid (cries Joſeph) that I ſhould do ſo, the man in whoſe hand the cup is found he ſhall be my ſervant, and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father."

Judah again came forward and makes an oration, which for beauty, ſimplicity, and pathos, is one of the moſt excellent of

any recorded in any hiſtory ſacred or prophane. "O my Lord! let thy ſervant, I pray thee, ſpeak a word in my Lord's ear, and let not thine anger burn againſt thy ſervants, for thou art even as Pharaoh. My Lord aſked his ſervants, ſaying, have ye a father, or a brother? and we ſaid unto my Lord, we have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one, and his brother is dead and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou ſaideſt unto thy ſervants, bring him down unto me that I may ſet mine eyes upon him. And we ſaid unto my Lord, the lad cannot leave his father, for if he ſhould leave his father his father would die. And thou ſaideſt unto thy ſervants, Except your youngeſt brother come down with you, you ſhall ſee my face no more. And it came to paſs, when we came up unto thy ſervant, my father, we told him the words of my Lord. And my father ſaid, go again and buy us a little food; and we ſaid, we cannot go down, if our youngeſt brother be not with us; and thy ſervant, my father, ſaid unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two ſons, and the one went out from me, and I ſaid, ſurely he is torn in pieces, and I ſaw him not ſince; and if ye take this alſo from me, and miſchief befal him, ye ſhall bring down my grey hairs with ſorrow to the grave. Now, therefore, when I come to thy ſervant, my father and the lad be not with us, ſeeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life, it ſhall come to paſs, when he ſeeth the lad is not with us, that he will die, and thy ſervants ſhall bring down the grey hairs of thy ſervant our father, with ſorrow to the grave. For thy ſervant became ſurety for the lad, ſaying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I ſhall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now, therefore, I pray thee let thy ſervant abide inſtead of the lad, a bondſman unto my Lord, and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how ſhall I go to my father and the lad be not with me, leſt peradventure, I ſhall ſee the evil that ſhall come upon my father."

A diſcourſe ſo impreſſive, ſo full of filial piety, came home to every tender feeling of Joſeph's heart; his end was anſwered, he ſaw that his brethren loved their brother, that all the envy that rankles in the boſoms of a divided family was deſtroyed. Benjamin was ſuppoſed to be guilty of theft, yet inſtead of upbraiding they acknowledge his guilt, and offer their own lives or liberties to redeem his. This was what Joſeph wanted to know, to ſearch their hearts and call forth every root of bitterneſs that might be concealed, that every ſeparate intereſt ariſing from their having different mothers might be deſtroyed, ſo that he might be enabled to return them unto his aged parent

rent cloathed in meekneſs, gentleneſs, and warm fraternal love.

Joſeph loved his father, the ſpeech of Judah blew upon the filial flame, it ſhewed him his affectionate aged parent ſtill mourning over his abſent child, he could no longer refrain, he cauſed all the attendants to go out from him, he wept aloud, and ſaid, "I am Joſeph; doth my father yet live? and his brethren could not anſwer him, for they were troubled at his preſence. And Joſeph ſaid unto his brethren, Come near unto me I pray you, and they came near; and he ſaid, I am Joſeph your brother whom ye ſold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourſelves that you ſold me hither, for God did ſend me before you to preſerve life."

Much inſtruction is contained in this account of Joſeph; the believer can but infer if God could act by ſuch intricate providence, to bring the brethren of Joſeph to bow down unto him; cannot he act by the ſame myſterious chain of providential circumſtances to bring the Jewiſh nation, the brethren of Jeſus, to be troubled at the preſence of Jeſus, to be aſtoniſhed at their ingratitude to him, and to bow unto him with a voluntary ſubjection and pay full homage to his ſceptre. If ſuch an intricate plot as this could be laid with ſo much wiſdom, and carried on with ſuch firm reſolution by a man like ourſelves; ſay cannot the true Joſeph, him who conſtituted the ages, cannot he lay down ſuch a plan and cauſe it to take place as ſhall bring his brethren after the fleſh to bow down unto him. How are ye ſlow of heart to believe all that God hath ſpoken by his ſervants of old concerning Jeſus the Meſſiah, whoſe name is exalted high above every name in heaven and on earth, that he may accompliſh the glorious plan of reſtoration which the immortal Father hath contrived for all his creatures. What an aſtoniſhing ſcene will that be, when the preſent midnight ſhades of mental darkneſs ſhall diſappear at the brightneſs of the ſplendor of Jeſus of Nazareth, when he cometh in all the glory of his Father, attended by the innumerable hoſt of firſt born ſaints and holy angels.

When Chriſt firſt came, his brethren knew him not; they ſaw him him only as the ſon of the Carpenter. In like manner, when the brethren of Joſeph went down into Egypt, they knew not Joſeph, they ſaw in him the Lord of Egypt, but they beheld not in him their brother, all was dark and wonderful, they were aſtoniſhed other ſtrangers ſhould be permitted to buy corn, but that they ſhould be accounted as ſpies, that he ſhould permit them to carry corn home with

them to their families, and yet detain Simeon from them. So when Jesus came he healed their sick and supplied their wants, but concealed himself, they saw not in his person the glories of the Messiah, they discovered not in him the pomp, the splendor, or outward dignity of the seed of David, the ruler of the world, and in consequence thereof they rejected him. Therefore, because they rejected in the person of Christ the counsel of God against themselves, they have been now for many ages past, scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth, the scorn, the reproach and contempt of mankind. Still they remain the brethren of Jesus—all their ingratitude and blasphemous reproaches have not destroyed his fraternal affection for them—he hath brought them into great distresses and will continue to bring them into greater; nothing they have ever yet suffered is to be compared with what remains for them to suffer, as appears by comparing the prophecies of Ezekiel with those of Zechariah. Then at the moment of their distress shall the Lord even Jesus appear as their Saviour. O then how will their hearts be troubled when he shall say I am Jesus, Jesus whom you mocked, ridiculed, spit upon, reproached! Jesus whom ye crucified, whose name you have held in abhorrence, whose love you have neglected and despised! Astonishment and weeping shall take hold of them—no wonder when memory recalls all their past ingratitude, when recollection causes all their folly and all their crimes to appear before them; no wonder that overpowered with shame and deep contrition, every family and every individual shall seek the inmost retirement to pour forth their supplications to that brother whom they have despised and rejected, no longer shall they refuse to pay obedience unto him.

Judah could make a fine oration, but when he knew it was Joseph whom he had addressed, he could speak no more. So shall it be with the Jewish nation in that day, when they shall look upon him whom they have pierced and mourn. No more will they attempt to plead their own innocence, and indirectly cast the blame upon him with a "thou saidest unto thy servants," but consciousness of guilt and heartfelt contrition will utterly silence every defence, with Lord be merciful to me a sinner.

Every punishment God inflicts is full of love, all is intended to subdue and humble, that the rebel may know his own heart, and feel the plague of it that he may be healed. Great is the malignity of sin, it is of a hardening nature, it groweth upon the habits till it contaminates the soul of man. It becomes requisite

quiſite to man that he ſhould ſuffer that he may ceaſe from ſin, and the ſame afflictions which tend to humble the pride of the human heart, tend to ſubdue at the ſame time the whole ſoul of the ſinner into perfect obedience to the ſceptre of Jeſus. Joſeph appears to have had as little of envy, guile, pride, and revenge in his compoſition as any man whatever; his ſoul on the contrary, ſeems to have been formed for love and friendſhip, yet he found it neceſſary to purſue for ſome time this rough myſterious treatment of his brethren; he knew that envy, hatred and malice had guided their actions, and that ſuch paſſions were contrary to brotherly love, to domeſtic felicity, to virtue, to preſent enjoyment and to future glory; his fraternal affection and his wiſdom led him, therefore, to the exerciſe of his power, that he might correct every evil principle that muſt otherwiſe have been a bar to their happineſs; he longed for them to be in ſuch a ſtate that he might mingle his ſoul with theirs, and have mutual flux and reflux of pure uncontaminated fraternal love from the heart. Thus it is with Chriſt and his brethren the Jewiſh nation: therefore, it was under his direction that Jeruſalem was ſurrounded by the Romans, he ſaw the wives of his brethren kill and eat their own offspring; it was under his inſpection that the walls of his beloved city was ſurrounded by the bodies of his crucified brethren, and greater miſeries than theſe by his appointment ſhall take place. Yet he loved them, he wept over them, he died for them, his heart is not changed, he ſtill compaſſionates their diſtreſſes whilſt he inflicts them. It is therefore from his love that they ſpring—the hardneſs of their hearts needeth ſuch ſevere afflictions to ſoften and ſubdue them; all the kind acts that he could poſſibly have exhibited, would never make them ſubmit, but when they are come through their own guilt and folly to their worſt eſtate, and as a nation are about to be deſtroyed, his ſhewing himſelf in the air as their Saviour, and bringing them a full deliverance, appearing in all the glory of his Father, attended by angelic hoſts with the firſt born ſons of God, exhibiting his hands and feet and ſide pierced and wounded for them. this ſhall indeed overpower the ſtubbornneſs of their hearts, and bring them with contrite hearts joyfully to ſubmit themſelves unto him, and if the Jewiſh nation who have hitherto reſiſted every offer of mercy, can be brought to a voluntary ſubmiſſion to the Son of God, I have no heſitation upon my mind conceaning the full ſalvation of the Gentiles.

Our Lord ſays, if the mighty works which he wrought in Canaan, had been wrought amongſt the heathen in Sodom, Gomorrah,

Gomorrah, or Nineveh, they would have long ſince repented in ſackcloth and aſhes. If Jeſus, therefore, knew how to bring down the ſtubbornneſs of their hearts, how eaſily can he ſubdue the hearts of all mankind. If he will be gracious to that ſtubborn hardened nation, will he not have mercy upon all and pour forth a ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication upon all; but Chriſtians are fond of ſaying all, all, inviting all, intreating all, and promiſing all, and yet by all meaning only a ſmall, puny, pitiful, little petty circle, and not like the ſcriptural, a circle encloſing within it the vaſt circumference of creation. The goodneſs, juſtice, and mercy of God muſt all harmonize together, then every attribute of Jehovah will ſhine in perfect ſplendor and none of his attributes eclipſe each other. In the means to and final accompliſhment of the full reſtoration of all the creatures of God, none can ſhew which is the greateſt, his wiſdom, his power, or his love, but all are equal for in all he is infinite.

Let me recommend to your further and more leiſurely conſideration the character of Joſeph, who is the greateſt of all the ſcriptures types of Chriſt Jeſus, excepting Moſes—but Joſeph anſwers to the character of Jeſus in fifty inſtances.

Now unto the king, eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be honour and glory to the age of ages. Amen!

SERMON

SERMON VII.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

HOSEA XIII. 14.

I will ranſom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death! I will be thy plagues; O grave! I will be thy deſtruction; repentance ſhall be hid from mine eyes.

IT will be neceſſary rightly to underſtand theſe words, to conſider them in connection with the whole of the prophecy. God was ſpeaking of a rebellious people that he was determined to deſtroy; notwithſtanding all his invitations and promiſes, exhortations, and threatenings, they ſtill continued rebellious; hardening themſelves in iniquity. "They ſin," ſaith God, "More and more, and have made them molten "images of their ſilver, and idols, according to their own un- "derſtanding, all of it the work of the craftsman; they ſay of "them, let the men that ſacrifice kiſs the calves." It was from the iniquity of the Iſraelites, that the anger of Jehovah was kindled; they having reſiſted his offers of mercy, he begins to increaſe the ſeverity of his threatenings, and tells them, "They ſhall be as the morning dew, that paſſeth away; as "the chaff, that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor; "and as the ſmoke out of the chimney."

Jehovah had long been gracious unto them, he had given fertility to their fields, he had bleſſed the labour of their hands; traffic had increaſed their merchandize, the hand of his Providence had poured plenty into their lap, they enjoyed his beneficence, and "According to their paſture, ſo were they filled; they

they were filled, and their heart was exalted: Therefore" faith Jehovah, " have they forgotten me." Awful conſideration! the ox knoweth his owner, and the aſs his maſter's crib; but Iſrael did not know the hand that liberally ſupplied all his wants. The ſons of men ſcarce ever conſider from whence their bleſſings are derived. They get exalted, and their hearts are lifted up, and God their maker is diſregarded.

God will be known amongſt his people, his name ſhall be exalted amongſt all the nations; if his goodneſs leadeth them not to repentance, his afflictive diſpenſations, ſhall manifeſt his power; the ſtubbornneſs of all the enemies of Jehovah ſhall be ſubdued; they ſhall behold his love and kiſs the rod that ſmote them; for they ſhall be ſmitten according to the hardneſs of their impenitent hearts: for they treaſure up unto themſelves wrath, againſt the day of wrath. Thus did Ephraim of old; it was the iniquity of Ephraim, that occaſioned the denunciation of the awful judgments that Jehovah by his Prophet, denounces againſt them. It was this that as it were, forced the God of love to ſay, " I will be unto them like a lion; as a leopard " by the way, I will obſerve them, I will meet them as a bear " bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart; " there will I devour them like a lion, the wild beaſt ſhall tear " them." What language can more fully ſpeak ſentiments of revenge; love unreturned, breaking forth like a fire. It ſeems as though Jehovah, having now exhauſted all his patience, was determined to ſweep them entirely away with the beſom of deſtruction. But immediately after this awful denunciation of vengeance, mercy comes flowing in, in a ſtrong and overflowing tide. " O Iſrael! thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf, but in me is thine help." Aſtoniſhing thought! it explains the whole cauſe of the evils that befall mankind. Thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf, no fatality, no decree, no abſolute neceſſity for men or nations to ſin and ruin themſelves; No! it is their own free choice; happineſs is before them if they will but ſeek the good of others, if they will but trace out the revealed conduct of God, and imitate it. But they ſeek their own advantage, their own glory. In their public and private conduct, even in their ſolemn adoration of Deity, they will purſue their own vain imaginations, and not the laws of their Maker. They corrupt their underſtandings, their doctrines, their worſhip, their practice; they deſtroy themſelves. The leaſt deviation from truth, is a deviation from wiſdom and from happineſs, and muſt increaſe till miſery and deſtruction enſue, unleſs the arm of Jehovah turn the overwhelming tide with the rock

rock of affliction. The Jews of old deviated from the worſhip appointed by God; and they deviated not out of contempt, but that they might honour him: they had his word, but ſtudied it not. It was thus that Micah made the molten image, and appointed a Levite to be the prieſt of Jehovah; and thus onward they went, by little and little, adding to, or diminiſhing from his law, till gradually they fell into groſs idolatry, and all its abominations. In like manner the church of Chriſt thought to honour God by adorning the ſimplicity of his worſhip with Jewiſh ceremonies; till, at laſt, they erected the throne of antichriſt in the temple of Jehovah; whilſt error, ſuperſtition, and abomination rivetted the oppreſſive chains of perſecution, ſubſtituting ſound for ſenſe, ſhew for religion, ignorance for wiſdom, till they had totally deſtroyed the purity and ſimplicity of divine truth. Happy indeed is it for the church of God, that though they deſtroy themſelves, in him is their help.

" I will be thy king," ſaith Jehovah to Ephraim. " Where is any other that can ſave thee in all thy cities? and thy judges, of whom thou ſaidſt, Give me a king and princes? I gave thee a king in my anger, and took him away in my wrath." Jehovah here repreſents himſelf by way of contraſt, gratifying the deſires of his people in giving them a king—one choſen from amongſt thoſe whom he appointed as judges and ſaviours to his people, under himſelf the Great Judge and Saviour. Theſe kings had ruined them by their folly, ignorance, pride, and ambition; he promiſes to re-aſſume his ancient title of King of Iſrael---" I will be thy king;" and, by the exerciſe of his ſovereignty, to reſtore his deſtroyed people to more than their ancient glory. He does not ſay, that he will wait till they call upon him to retake his throne; but he declares, that they ſhall eat the fruits of their own ſelf-dependence; and that, when they have ſufficiently ſuffered, for ever to ceaſe from their ſin, " I will," ſaith he, " be thy help; I will come unto thee in the hour of extremity, manifeſt my loving kindneſs, and help and ſave thee, O Ephraim! I will not, as I have done before, give thee a king in my anger, becauſe of thy pride and ſelf-dependence, and take him away in my wrath becauſe of his rebellion againſt me; but I will pity thine afflictions; in mercy I will ſend thee a deliverer; one who ſhall not rebel againſt my will; one who ſhall promote my glory amongſt the ſons of men; my loving-kindneſs ſhall eſtabliſh his throne; and to him ſhall the nations of the earth pay their tribute."

" The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up, his ſin is hid. The ſorrows of a travailing woman ſhall come upon him; for he ſhould not ſtay long in the place of the breaking forth of children." Here God declares, that, in conſequence of his folly, death ſhall be the portion of Ephraim. His iniquity is bound up---As a bag of money, according to the cuſtom of the Eaſt, was bound up when its ſum was completed, ſo was the iniquity of Ephraim; his ſin was hid; his puniſhment enſued: the ſorrows of a travailing woman ſhould come upon him: famine, ſword, captivity, and peſtilence, with all their horrors, ſhould come upon him, becauſe he would not ſubmit to the divine diſpenſations; he would not bend his neck to the yoke of divine government.

In the midſt of theſe awful denunciations of judgment comes in the words of my text---" I will ranſom them from the power of the grave." It is eaſy, by comparing the word here rendered *grave*, to prove that God, by his prophet, did not mean to ſay, that he would ſnatch them from the deſtruction he had threatened; but, on the contrary, that they ſhould ſuffer, be ſwept off by death, and caſt into hell, the place of puniſhment, and afterwards be redeemed from it; for the ſame word occurs Pſalm ix. 18. " For the wicked ſhall be turned into *hell*, and all the nations that forget God;" as likewiſe in many other places: the word, therefore means the receptacle for departed ſpirits: and as Ephraim was to be cut off for his ſins, he was to go to hell to be puniſhed for them, yet even there does the promiſe reach. " I will ranſom them from the power of hell;" the *hand of hell*; which ſhall, as it were, be cloſed upon them to hold them faſt; I will open it; I will ranſom, I will deliver them.

We ſee, therefore, that it was in conſequence of the folly of Ephraim that he was condemned to death. He was an unwiſe ſon. Alas! his heavenly father had inſtructed him in wiſdom, but he rejected the counſel of God; he would walk after his own vain imagination: he was indeed unwiſe, for he ſought for wiſdom in his own headſtrong will; in doing what he thought right in his own eyes. And may not this be the caſe with ſome of you? In ſo large a congregation it is not improbable but that there muſt be ſome unwiſe, headſtrong children; ſelf-willed, lovers of themſelves; men and women who have deſtroyed themſelves. Before I had my preſent views of the love of God, I could not behold a large congregation with my preſent feelings. I could but think on the many preſent who

who were called to be partakers of future glory, and how very few amongſt the number would become choſen to that happy ſituation. My ſoul was harrowed up with the horrid idea of a dreadful eternity of miſery, ſorrow ever new, and anguiſh, pains, and groans for ever young. According to the views I then had, I was more diſpoſed to weep over them than invite them to believe: I conſidered the multitude of them as doomed by the unfruſtrable will of eternal fate to never ending miſery. And the joys that aroſe at the repentance of a few, were not equal to the ſorrows of my heart for the endleſs ſufferings of the many: the weight of the awful conſideration was by far more than a balance to all popular applauſe: I trembled at the praiſes of ſinners, who might, as I thought, be doomed to ſuch everlaſting miſery.

"I will redeem them from death." This cannot but imply that Ephraim muſt die; that redemption ſhould not take place upon them in this life. "I will redeem them from death:" they muſt then be under the power of death, or they could not be redeemed from it. Ephraim had ſinned grievouſly; and the fruit of ſin is death, as naturally as that when a woman hath conceived, ſhe in due time bringeth forth her offſpring. So when ſin is conceived in the heart, it goeth on to outward action, till the fruit, being fully ripe, it bringeth forth death. This awful conſideration is ſeldom in the heart of the ſinner, when he is rolling the delicious mortel of iniquity beneath his tongue, and crieth out "How ſweet is it!" Little doth he then think of the bitterneſs, the woe, the miſery that will enſue. The taſte may be pleaſant on the palate, but how bitter is the digeſtion of it. The eyes of the drunkard ſparkle with joy when he beholdeth that the wine is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itſelf aright in the glaſs; his heart panteth with delight when he vieweth the ſparkling glaſs; he ſeizeth it with rapture, and with his whole ſoul purſueth the feſtive ſcene. But death is in the cup; his eyes are inflamed with fire; his ſpirits are elated without cauſe; he feels ſuperior dignity in his nature; his underſtanding is darkened; his apprehenſion is gone; he taketh offence where none was given; his dignity is wounded: he findeth that the pleaſing poiſon biteth like a ſerpent: he hath woe, he hath ſorrow: his ſpirit is contentious, and his tongue talkative: he gets quarrelſome, and hath wounds without cauſe. He forgetteth the end of his manhood; perhaps the wife of his boſom is forgotten: he beholdeth a ſtrange woman; he longeth for her embraces, and his heart uttereth perverſe things: his

corporeal faculties are weakened; he rocketh about like the waves of the ocean; he is unſteady, like the veſſel that floateth upon its billows: his faculties are overpowered; and although by himſelf he complaineth of being beaten, he waketh from the fumes of the wine, and is covered with aches and bruiſes; whilſt the fevered blood beats the aching temples in its impetuous courſe. It is not drunkenneſs alone that bringeth its puniſhment with it. No; every vice is followed by puniſhment; and every rational man cannot but diſcern the hand of Jehovah in cauſing every perverſion of his gifts to be attended with pain.

I made choice of this vice to illuſtrate my ſubject, becauſe ſome ſuppoſe it to be of ſo trivial a nature, that God will not regard it. They ſay, If it is a ſin, it is only a ſin againſt themſelves; but if they trace out its pernicious conſequences, they muſt find that it extends its baneful influence from themſelves to all around them, and renders every one dependent on them miſerable: it deſtroys the underſtanding, and renders the governing image of God leſs than a beaſt. To his coſt every one who delighteth habitually to put the bottle to his mouth, and is mighty to drink ſtrong drink, ſhall know, that, by his habitual drunkenneſs, he hath ſhut the gates of the millenial kingdom againſt himſelf: he ſhall tremble and be aſtoniſhed when he findeth that his name is enrolled with the fornicator, adulterer, and murderer. If this ſin is ſo ſeverely threatened in the Scriptures of truth, what ſhall we ſay of the profane ſwearer! The drunkard may perhaps plead the fever of his body which maketh him to crave the liquor to quench his thirſt; he may perſuade himſelf that his health requires it; and if he is overtaken by drunkenneſs, it was unintentional; but the ſwearer, the man who lightly taketh the name of his Maker within his polluted lips, or dares madly to wiſh curſes upon his fellow-creatures, ſtands without excuſe. No temptation whatever has he to plead as an alleviation of his guilt. If he believes there is no God, or no future puniſhment, he cannot but be conſidered as a fool for uſing words without meaning; and if he believes that there is a God, his bold, blaſphemous impertinence muſt merit the ſevereſt puniſhment at his hands in the day that he cometh to puniſh the ungodly, and them who know him not. The common ſwearer is guilty of a crime that Satan and his fallen hoſt would tremble at: bad as they are, there is not a devil that would execrate himſelf---not one amongſt thoſe impure ſpirits that would call down damnation on his own head. No! they expect the awful

prison of hell with solemn horror; they tremble at the name of Jesus; they dread the day when he shall sit in judgment upon them; and amongst all their millions there is not one that invocates upon his head the vengeance of the living God. ---O man, thou hast espied the iniquity of the infernal host, and thou consignest them, without pity, to unceasing torments, yet darest to expect pardon thyself, even when thou sinnest far more than the unhappy instruments who seduced thee from thy allegiance! Where is the man that would continually mock the name of an earthly monarch in his presence? Where is the man that would be so ungrateful as continually to ridicule his benefactor? If such instances cannot be produced, every reflecting mind cannot but pronounce the common swearer to be the maddest and most ungrateful of human beings: he mocketh the sovereign Monarch of all nature, and turns into ridicule his Creator, Preserver, and daily bountiful Benefactor.

Numerous, indeed, awfully so, are the iniquities that will consign men to the second death; all liars shall have a part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; none shall enter into the holy city that loveth or maketh a lie. It is a solemn thought, when we come to consider how this vice intermingles itself with all the concerns of mankind. Behold the statesman, the nobleman, the gentleman, the merchant, the tradesman, the mechanic, high and low, rich and poor, each and all have their respective lies of business, of politeness, and of folly: no station seemeth free from it; it seems to have become a part of education; esteemed necessary, even by men calling themselves Christians, to lie with a good grace; and whilst they are ready to murder the man who chargeth them with the crime, they feel no compunction of heart if it is not found out: and if they have sufficient impudence to avow their wickedness, they boast of it as their glory. I dare not say that some lies possess not less guilt than others; but this I dare say, that no one who loveth or maketh a lie shall have a part in the holy city. Christian, dare to reflect before you speak. Better indeed would it be to suffer death than to speak falsehood, and lose an habitation in the New Jerusalem, in the city of the living God, which cometh down from heaven. God is truth, but the liar is untruth; he is therefore diametrically opposite to God. One is light, and courts the closest examination; the other is darkness, and avoids it. How then can light and darkness have fellowship with each other? It is true, they are more or less heinous as they affect the liar or the society to which he belongs,

belongs, or the world at large. Some lies involve men in quarrels, malice, and death; others disturb the peace of families; others set the world in arms, and cover the field of battle with groans and blood and horror, whilst desolated nations mourn over their destruction; others are for the sake of filthy lucre; they are dictated by self-love, and keep up the jealousy, the suspicion, the mistrust of mankind; others spring from pride of heart; and, to prevent the condemnation of man, men foolishly dare the condemnation of God; others spring from the love of laughter; and the merry soul awfully weighs his spiritual inheritance against a joke? Alas! alas! who shall trace out the falsehoods of the human heart and human tongue! The guilt of them all must be according to the malice of the offender, and the extent of the consequences. But when we consider the dangers to which men are exposed by habit, by inclination, by occupation, and by their passions, we cannot but observe the wisdom of that saying of the apostle James; "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." Almighty Father, give us more holy resolution that we may at all times speak the truth; what we would wish thee to hear, what we may not repent of when we shall be called to appear before thee to give an account of the deeds done in the body.

Despising the gospel and rejecting the offers of pardon made unto man by Christ Jesus our Lord is another crime that shall incur the penalty of the second death. When men who have received the gospel can become so hardened in unbelief as to trample under foot the son of God, and to account the blood of the covenant wherewith they were cleansed an unholy thing, it is not to be wondered at that such characters must meet with severe punishment. They are sick unto death, and yet the only remedy that can restore them to health they reject: they must suffer the pains that their mental disease occasions, till such time as that they feel and tremble with horror at its awful pangs, and gladly take hold by faith of that remedy which the merciful compassion of their heavenly Father provideth for their disease. If a man will despise the faithful instruction given him in the sacred word, there is a great danger of that man's sinning unto death; for if they who despised the law of Moses, died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment must that man be thought worthy who rejects the son of God, and tramples upon the mercies of divine goodness; who, when God hath made known his love by the gift of his son, and he, having believed the divine report, brought forth

forth fruit unto life, and, through faith, tafted, by that hope which faileth not, of the power of the age to come, having, even in this mortal ſtate, realized by faith the glories of the kingdom of the Meſſiah; if ſuch a one turns back into the kingdom of Satan, through the terror of man, or the powerful effects of filth lucre, the impulſe of his paſſions, or any other overcoming evil, there remaineth for him no more ſacrifice for ſin; he hath rejected the pardon freely beſtowed upon him by his ſovereign; he hath treated his favours with contempt: he hath rebelled againſt his Maker, his Redeemer, his Benefactor, and his Sovereign: he muſt ſuffer the penalty due to his crime; the ſecond death and all its infernal horrors awaits him; hell is now heating for him---for him, and for every wilful tranſgreſſor ſhall the cloud capped mountains, the mighty concave of this hollow globe, with all the beauties of art and nature be diſſolved into one unconfined deluge of burning lava, the awful lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone throughout the age of ages, which is the ſecond death.

All unrepented ſin leads down to death. Awful thought! ---All ſin is a deviation from truth; every individual deviation leads the mind of the deviator into darkneſs; and, through the ſhades that cover his path, he makes another falſe ſtep, and from that another, till at laſt he ſtumbles on the gates of hell and death. Thus David ſinned when he deviated from that firmneſs with which he ought to have held the reins of his government, when he omitted to puniſh Joab for the murder of Abner. As the repreſentative of Jehovah the king of Iſrael, he ought not to have ſaid, "Ye ſons of Zeruiah are too hard for me," but to have enforced the law, and cauſed the murderer to be put to death, that the land might not become polluted with blood: but David from fear deviated from his duty. And alas! who is there amongſt us, that, in the ſame ſituation, might not have done the ſame? But when we ſee the upholding hand of Jehovah, and the awful conſequences of diſobedience, we may have our integrity preſerved. To this one weak ſtep of David may be attributed the future daring ambition of Joab, the inceſt of Amon, the fratricide and impiety of Abſalom, and all thoſe troubles that ſhook the throne of David to its centre, and filled his houſe with adultery, with rebellion, and with death. Repent then, of all your ſins; think over frequently your paſt tranſactions; weigh them in the balance of the ſanctuary, and greatly dare, in all your actions, to manifeſt yourſelves the diſciples of the ſon of God, and preſs forward after a crown that fadeth not away.

But

But what death is that to which Ephraim was ſentenced, and from which he has here the promiſe of deliverance? Some ſay it is natural death. But what righteous man would expect deliverance from that? Would the all-wiſe Jehovah ſpeak of natural death as the moſt dreadful of all puniſhments? Too many of the giddy and thoughtleſs of the maſs of mankind, laughing at it, meet it with unconcern, whilſt the righteous, who know the terrors of the law, and the glories of the age to come, ſuffer it. What is natural death but an extinction of the preſent ſcene of things; in itſelf it implies not pleaſure or pain. All muſt die---the high, the mighty, and the noble, with the beggar, the miſer, and the contemptible---It is the lot of humanity; and can this be holden up by Jehovah as a peculiar puniſhment that ſhould fall upon Ephraim? "I will tear them like a lion." What, by natural death? So Jehovah hath already torn Noah the righteous man, who alone was found worthy to be preſerved when a world was cut off. So he deſtroyed Abraham his friend, Moſes the holy man with whom he converſed face to face. This deſtruction of Ephraim muſt therefore be ſomething more awful than natural death; for all muſt die; and in itſelf death is not a puniſhment. If, therefore, the death of the body had been all that was threatened to befal Ephraim, it would not have been any threat to be heeded; for where is or has been (except Enoch and Elijah) the man who did not expect death?

The prophet ſpeaks of the iniquity of Ephraim as fully compleated---"The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his ſin is hid." According to the cuſtom of the merchants of the Eaſt in their traffic, the money was told out, it was then put into a bag, which was bound up, it was marked and ſealed, and it paſſed current without any future inſpection.----- Thus God repreſents himſelf as having told out the iniquities of Ephraim; the number of them was compleated; he therefore had (ſtill keeping on the ſimile) bound up the bag, and laid it by in a place of ſecurity, not to be increaſed by an accumulation of additional guilt, nor to be diminiſhed by the ſin-ſubduing fruits of repentance.

Yes; "the iniquity of Ephraim was bound up; his ſin was hid," His guilt being compleated, vengeance was gone forth; and the prophet ſpeaks as ſeeing the juſt judgments of the Almighty as having ſwept him away from the world, and placed him in a place of conſcious exiſtence and direful ſufferings---"The ſorrows of a travailing woman ſhall come upon him: he is an unwiſe ſon; for he ſhould not ſtay long in the place

of

of the breaking forth of children." Here we behold the cauſe and the effect---The cauſe of Ephraim's deſtruction was his folly; he leaned unwiſely to his own ways, and ſinned; and the conſequence that followed was, that, after repeated warnings and checks, he was ſwept from the earth by the providential conduct of God, in war, peſtilence, and famine; and in his future ſtate was doomed to ſorrow, miſery, and woe, compared to the pangs of a woman in labour. Compare this with the ſpeech of Wiſdom, in the firſt chapter of Proverbs---"How long, ye ſimple ones, will ye love ſimplicity? and the ſcorners delight in ſcorning? and fools hate knowledge? Turn ye at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my ſpirit upon you; I will make known my words unto you. Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed; I have ſtretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my reproof; I alſo will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh like a deſolation, and your deſtruction cometh as a whirlwind; when diſtreſs and anguiſh cometh upon you: then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer; they ſhall ſeek me early, but ſhall not find me: becauſe that they hated knowledge, and did not chooſe the fear of the Lord; they would none of my counſel, they deſpiſed all my reproof; therefore ſhall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." Here is an awful deſcription of the conduct of God with the wicked in a future ſtate. In the preſent period of exiſtence whoſoever calleth upon him in the day of adverſity, although he be a ſinning Ahab, or an impious Manaſſeh, he will hear them, and be their ſaviour; but in that dread ſtate, they ſhall call upon Jehovah, as Dives did upon Abraham, and he will anſwer, "Becauſe I have called, and ye have refuſed,---I alſo will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh."----"Son, thou in thy life-time hadſt thy good things, but now thou art tormented." In the preſent ſtate of things, men ſee not diſtinctly the hand of Jehovah in the government of his providence; but in the future ſtate there is no infidelity---the devils believe-----the tormented ſpirit beholdeth the hand of Jehovah. God doth indeed there meet his rebellious creatures as a lion; as a leopard he obſerveth them, yea, even as a bear that is robbed of her whelps. Arrayed in terrors he meeteth them, and ſubdueth them till they tremble at his power. They call upon him for mercy, for pardon, for forgiveneſs. "O for a drop of water to cool my tongue, for I am ſore tormented in this flame!" Thus

Jehovah leaveth them to feel positive pain, and with it sorrow and anguish of heart for all that is past. This deadens not their feelings; no! it awakens every tender sensation of soul; it calls to mind each endearing tie that sweetened their passage through life; and with Dives, they are ready to call upon the Father of Spirits to exert every natural, moral, and even preternatural means, to stop their much-loved friends in the mad career of their impiety, and snatch them from the painful sufferings of that death which the Scriptures call by the name of destruction---that place of utter darkness, where there is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Solomon puts this language in their mouth (Prov. v.); "How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me. I was almost in all evil, in the midst of the congregation and assembly." Sinner, look here---Thou mayest hide thy sin in thy bosom, but the hand of Jehovah can search it out; there is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed, however secret thy conduct may be. If thou dost not now repent, and forsake thy sins, though death and the grave cover it, yet there, even in the gloomy mansions of death, the arm of Jehovah shall shake thy soul, and, with horrid anguish, bring thee to mourn over thy past misconduct, and acknowledge his justice whilst thou shuddereſt at thy past iniquities.

This is a very gloomy subject, but how much more gloomy must it be to be a subject of it for days, for weeks, for months, for years, nay, perhaps for ages! How wise shall we be if we now strive to avoid it! We know that punishment must end, because it is of a corrective nature; but it must first have answered its end; the subject of it must not only see and love virtue, but must loathe vice; dread it as a serpent, and flee from the least appearance of it; obedience to God must be the only anxious desire of his heart, and his every thought must be love. Whether to bring the mind of the wicked to this state will take a revolution of the earth when turned into a lake of fire, or a sabbath of years, or a period of forty-nine thousand years, before the grand jubile is proclaimed, who can tell? Things revealed belong unto us and to our children, but things that are concealed unto God. But though its duration is concealed, its end is not; and if we may judge from the rest of the providential conduct of God, the work of restoration will be gradual: for our Jehovah, although a consuming fire, yet rewardeth every man according to his works.

There

There are ſome men who attempt to ridicule the idea of limited puniſhment; nothing can pleaſe their imagination but endleſs, unceaſing horrors—ſin and blaſphemy increaſing daily, ages upon ages, without end! O my ſoul! enter thou not into their melancholy fancies; but dwell upon the retributive juſtice of God, and fear his holy name. There is no occaſion for the imagination to blow up the fire of hell into a hotter furnace than God himſelf has made it, or to lengthen out its duration—He has deſcribed it ſufficiently dreadful. Hear, O ſinner, and tremble, and turn from thine evil ways, leſt thou becomeſt a partaker in the threatenings he has pronounced againſt all that do evil. " Unto the wicked God ſaith, What haſt thou to do to declare my ſtatutes, or that thou ſhouldeſt take my covenant in thy mouth, ſeeing thou hateſt inſtruction, and caſteſt my words behind thee? When thou ſaweſt a thief, thou conſentedſt unto him, and haſt been partaker with adulterers. Thou giveſt thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou ſitteſt and ſpeakeſt againſt thy brother; thou ſlandereſt thine own mother's ſon. Theſe things haſt thou done, and I kept ſilence: thou thoughteſt that I was altogether like thyſelf: but I will reprove thee, and ſet them in order before thine eyes. Now, conſider this, ye that forget God, leſt I tear in pieces, and there be none to deliver."—— Dreadful thought! that Jehovah, the father of mercies, the author and ſupporter of my exiſtence, the God whoſe very nature is love---that *he* ſhould reprove me for my ſins before men and angels---that *he* ſhould lay open before me the wonders of his providential care, and my repeated acts of tranſgreſſion; whilſt with horror I in vain attempt to turn from the loathſome ſight. You who have felt what a bitter thing it is to feel the anguiſh of an accuſing conſcience, you can teſtify, that this tearing to pieces of the ſoul is, if poſſible, ten thouſand times worſe than the moſt cruel death. How many, to eſcape the tortures of their own heart, have attempted, by their own hands, to flee from the ſight; but alas! when at the bar of Jehovah, none can deliver! the pangs muſt be felt! whilſt hell itſelf, with wide extended portals, ſtands ready to receive the unhappy ſufferer, and increaſe the anguiſh of his mental pains by poſitive fire! Oh! 'tis a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. His goſpel you have trampled upon, and treated his earneſt invitations to accept of pardon, with contempt.

When I conſider the awful conſequences, to the wicked, of the day of judgment, I think, and tremble. What, in the pre-

ſent ſtate of exiſtence, can poſſibly compenſate for the loſſes that may befal me on that day, if I now do not make my calling and election ſure? To have my Maker turn his back upon me, and ſay, I never knew you! To hear him order me out of his preſence, as unworthy to ſet my unhallowed feet in that holy city where he delighteth to dwell; and not only there to loſe my portion, but to have my face covered with ſhame and confuſion whenever I behold his glorious face; that face ſo glorious, that none on earth can behold it and live. To behold the Saviour ſitting upon the throne of judgment, and ſee him unfold the books which ſhall call to light the ſecret actions of my paſt life, with all my public tranſgreſſions! Lord, keep me from beholding my ſecret ſins in the light of thy countenance. Who could endure that awful ſight! Who now can behold himſelf, though but partially, in the ſecret moment of private recollection, and not be diſguſted! But to ſee all our ſecret ſins, our impure thoughts, and unholy deeds, ſtand in array, whilſt pride and ſelf-love flee away from the ſight, and leave us a prey to ſelf-contempt, calling upon the mountains and rocks to fall upon us, and hide us from the preſence of the Majeſty of Heaven---!

Many men are fond of drawing their companions into the ſame ſins as themſelves are guilty of. If you are determined to make a trial of future judgment yourſelf, Oh, do not this! The conſciouſneſs of your own guilt will be fully ſufficient for you to bear, without increaſing your ſorrows by the aggravating reflections of your companions, whom you have made to be partakers of your ſufferings. As the recollection of having done good gives delight to the godlike mind, ſo the reflection of having occaſioned others to ſuffer evil, will prove more troubleſome than even all our own ſufferings. To look around you on your former thoughtleſs companions, and ſee them weeping, wailing, and gnaſhing their teeth, and to think at that moment, Had it not been for me they might now have been in a ſtate of bliſs, enjoying the preſence of their Maker, and doing his holy will; but it was I that led them into evil; I taught them to laugh at divine mercy. I have robbed them of their purity, their happineſs, and glory; and cauſed them, by my tranſgreſſions, to be conſigned to this place of torments.--- Oh, then, call no company to travel with you that downward road. If you are reſolved on hell, wiſely dare to go alone, that you may only have perſonal crimes to ſuffer for, unaggravated by the accumulated guilt of others.

I will

I will not arm this ſecond death with more terrors than God himſelf has done. It is indeed an awful ſtate; but ſome have painted it with additional horrors. they have repreſented it as unceaſing in its duration, and to be continually increaſing in its guilt and in its puniſhment; each day adding freſh blaſphemies to thoſe that are paſt, and God, in conſequence, adding freſh fuel to their fire, whilſt the devil and his angels are the inſtruments in his hands of tormenting the damned ſpirits.---But where did they learn theſe things? Not from the Scripture; that deſcribes the puniſhment of the ſecond death, but mentions not any of theſe things: they are the flights of fancy, the invention of ſome melancholy brain, and received into the church as truth in the days of antichriſtian darkneſs: as the day of divine knowledge ariſes, theſe clouds of ſuperſtition and ignorance ſhall paſs away.

Believers in divine revelation ought not to add to, any more than they would diminiſh from, the language of Scripture: they ſhould at leaſt do the ſacred writings as much juſtice as they would the Commentaries of Cæſar, or the Comedies of Terence; was this the caſe, inſtead of repreſenting the character of Jehovah as that of an almighty revengeful tyrant, acting towards his miſtaken creatures without any end, they would behold in him a compaſſionate father, whoſe mercies fail not; a benevolent Deity, who loveth every thing that he hath made, whoſe tender mercies are over all his works, rendering his creatures leſs puniſhment than they deſerve; one whoſe wakened wrath moveth with unwilling feet, whilſt his ready mercies ſwiftly fly. I know the terrors of the Lord, and would not, for ten thouſand worlds deceive any man concerning them; neither would I blacken the character of my God by painting it with aggravated horrors---everlaſting woe, unceaſing tortures, miſery whilſt God exiſts!---Where are ſuch words to be found? Not in the language of divine truth, but in the doctrines of men. Wherever the word *endleſs*, or *everlaſting*, is found in the Scriptures, or any other words of the like import, their real meaning muſt be determined by comparing text and context with the other paſſages where the ſame words occur; but that they any where convey an idea of *eternity*, I deny, and dare to challenge the boldeſt aſſertor of the eternity of hell torments to prove it. By the aſſertion they deſtroy the harmony of Scripture, eraſe the promiſes from the word of God, confound divine truth, open the flood-gate of infidelity, and totally deſtroy the doctrine of retributive juſtice, with

with the equality of the ways of Jehovah, the rewarder of every man according to his works.

But death itſelf ſhall be deſtroyed; for thus ſaith Jehovah concerning Ephraim, whom he had cauſed to ſuffer the ſecond death, " I will ranſom them from the power of the grave." This promiſe is full of grace and goodneſs, made unconditionally to the moſt wicked and rebellious of people, and ſhews forth the ſovereign free grace of God in the moſt ſtriking manner. " I will ranſom," not the righteous, but thoſe who had forgot God their Saviour, who had broken his covenant, who had deſpiſed his laws, who had neglected his worſhip, who had preferred the ſervice of ſtocks and ſtones to the obeying the living God---them, ſaith Jehovah, will I deliver from poſitive pain, inflicted as a puniſhment for their ſins. The hand of hell was cloſed upon them; I will open it, ſaith Jehovah---I will ranſom them from its power---I will unlock its graſp, and Ephraim ſhall be delivered.

This is an abſolute promiſe---" I will ranſom them from the grave;" not one condition is expreſſed. I will do it, ſaith Jehovah; I myſelf; not thine own merit, nor the merit or wiſdom of others; but I will ranſom them. I will not enter again into covenant with them, upon the performance of the conditions of which they ſhall be delivered from their place of ſuffering; no, unconditionally, of my own free will, by my own free grace, this rebellious, this diſobedient, this gainſaying people, I will ranſom, ſaith Jehovah, from the power of the grave; I will fit them for the enjoyment of life and happineſs; I will call them again my children, and they ſhall call me father; for they ſhall be my people, and I will be their God.

I once did not behold the greatneſs of the divine love as I now do, but verily thought that all ſuch as were ſaved muſt here believe in the Lord Jeſus, and bring forth the fruits of faith in holy obedience; all the reſt I concluded would be endleſsly cut off from peace and righteouſneſs and joy. Upon this narrow ſcale, I excluded millions of the human race from future bliſs. Examine the bills of mortality, and you will find that more than two thirds of the children of men are ſaved without faith or obedience; witneſs the infants who die under two years of age. If God could not ſave without theſe, what would become of them? They could not either believe or obey, and they muſt be loſt; for in Adam all have ſinned; therefore, if faith and obedience here are abſolutely neceſſary for ſalvation, they muſt be excluded from future bliſs. The

makers

makers of human articles of faith do not see the awful extent which the premises they lay down must lead to. Blessed be the loving kindness of God my father, I see things now in a very different light; I behold that he hath provided a Saviour, and a great one; and that as they, poor helpless innocents, sinned in the loins of Adam without their consent or knowledge, in like manner, without their consent or knowledge, he hath provided a remedy; and therefore, as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive. Hence arises the difference of the providential conduct of God. On the infant who sinneth without his consent or knowledge, salvation is bestowed without his consent or knowledge; but on such as have sinned with their consent and knowledge, salvation cannot be bestowed but with their consent and knowledge. A child of five years of age has some small share of understanding; from five to ten years old, it is considerably more; they are capable of judging between what is right and wrong, bad tempers and actions and good ones. Suppose such to die ignorant of that salvation which cometh by faith, would you doom him to endless unceasing misery? Cannot the Father of spirits find means to restore him to knowledge, purity, and peace? Surely he can; in him all live, and move, and have their being; and as he formed them for happiness, so he knoweth how to communicate it.

You suppose the gospel is preached to those who are grown to years of discretion; but they seem to slight it. They who are come to years of maturity are capable of judging, and yet sin with their free consent, and with their knowledge. This was the case of Ephraim; he had the good news of salvation preached in figures under the Mosaical dispensation; he rejected the proffered mercies; with the full possession of his rational faculties, he cast away divine truth from him. Now, if Jehovah can save an infant under two years of age, without either his knowledge or consent, and can bring the infantine and youthful knowledge and consent of others to receive salvation, has not he power to subdue the manly understanding of his creatures by ways that we know not fully, and joyfully, with the utmost consent of their understanding, to receive salvation?

But laying reasoning aside, the promise of Jehovah is absolute---"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." If the prison is destroyed, the prisoner must be free.

free. Though Ephraim may be locked up in the prisons of this earth, in a prison so strong that no human arm can possibly deliver him, yet, if Jesus, who has all power both in heaven, earth, and hell, if he pull down the building, stone by stone, shall he not be able to unchain the unhappy sufferer, and ransom him from the tyrant's power? He both can and will do it; he will deliver the prisoner out of the pit in which there is no water. "By the blood of the covenant he will say unto the prisoners Go forth." If we saw a prison pulled entirely down to the ground, should we have a doubt in our minds whether or not any prisoners were confined therein? Most undoubtedly we should, from the state of the prison, pronounce the impossibility of the case. In like manner will the Father of Mercies put it beyond a doubt whether or not there are any unhappy creatures in a state of suffering; he will destroy the prison. "O grave! (or *hell*) I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hidden from mine eyes." I am glad to observe this passage here, because it fully confirms the absolute and unerring certainty of the action. It is not said, as when God was about to destroy the earth, that he repented of that which he had done; but, on the contrary, that he will not only perform that which he hath promised, in destroying hell and death, but that all looking back with regret to that which he had done should be for ever done away---repentance should be hidden from his eyes.

I daily make my request to God, through Jesus, who shed his blood for us, that none who hear me may ever fall into the condemnation of the second death; for the pangs thereof are awful beyond the powers of human language to describe: but we must not disguise the truth; though awful, they are not eternal; they are a means to an end; and in me it would be sin was I to say that God would never restore to immortality and bliss his punished subdued creatures; for God hath promised to ransom them from death, hell, and the grave.

I call upon my own soul, and upon all that hear me, continually to give God thanks for his great and precious promise that he will destroy hell and death: not that I fear them; for I enjoy, through the favour of my God, that continual peace that none but he can give or take away. It is not, therefore, for fear, that I preach this doctrine. I had hope in the promises of my God, and enjoyed the full assurance of faith, before I knew the extent of his love; but the knowledge thereof has widened my hope and strengthened my faith. Seeing, therefore, so much power, wisdom, and goodness, as I now do in

in the Deity, I feel my thankfulneſs and love increaſed; and knowing the terrors of the Lord, I exhort you to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold on the age of life.

But ſome may ſay, If this doctrine be true, why do not the wiſe, the learned, and the good, the goſpel miniſters, the ſervants of the living God, believe it? Alas! my friends, this was the queſtion the Phariſees of old put concerning the Meſſiah---Have any of the ſcribes and Phariſees believed on him? Our bleſſed Lord referred them to Moſes and the prophets---and to them do I refer you, with this obſervation, that it is evident, from the apoſtolic writings, and thoſe of the fathers, that the doctrine is not new, but that they believed it, taught it, and lived under a ſenſe of the power of it. May you do ſo, that you may not be hearers of the word, but doers of it alſo; that you may be amongſt the number of thoſe who ſhall form the chain of true believers from the days of Adam to the ſecond coming of Chriſt.

By this doctrine we are taught to know the character of God, that it is love and wiſdom---we diſcern all the mazes of divine Providence end in univerſal good----and even in the ſevereſt diſpenſations we ſtill behold him as our Father.

This doctrine preſerves the believer from infidelity; it takes him by the hand, and leads him to the oracle of truth, and cauſes him to ſee infinite wiſdom and unbounded goodneſs in the whole œconomy of nature and of grace; the man who from his youth had been taught this doctrine would not turn infidel, ſeeing that he would behold in all the chaſtiſements of God, both in this age and in the next, the good of the criminal was one end intended.

It deſtroys bigotry from the hearts of Chriſtians---it ends their perſecutions. No wrath, no malice, no ſtriſe, no evil ſpeaking, no back-biting, can poſſibly remain in the boſoms of thoſe who receive the doctine in all its connections—they are not of any party; but of the great ſect of the firſt-born whoſe names are written in heaven; they are the diſciples of Jeſus, and all their ambition is to be found worthy to be called by his name.

There is a meaſure of ſelf, of pride, of perverted nature, in every man, which muſt be deſtroyed, that God may be all in all: nothing is ſo likely to eradicate theſe as the doctrine of God's Univerſal love. It is this alone that can harmonize

the jarring parties of profeſſors; and when the watchmen of Iſrael ſee eye to eye----then, indeed, ſhall the earth be covered with the knowledge of the glory of God. It is for this purpoſe, and not for the love of novelty or deſire of fame, that I preach this doctrine. And it is my heart's deſire, that all the Lord's people may be prophets, teaching the boundleſs love of God to the ſons of men.

END OF THE SEVENTH SERMON.

SERMON VIII.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

COLOSSIANS, I. 13.

Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light.

THE whole ſentence, as it ſtands in connection, runs thus: "For this cauſe we alſo, ſince the day we heard it, do not ceaſe to pray for you, and to deſire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding: that ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleaſing, being fruitful in every good work, and increaſing in the knowledge of God; ſtrengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long ſuffering, with joyfulneſs; giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light; who hath delivered us from the powers of darkneſs, and hath tranſlated us into the kingdom of his dear ſon; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins."

This ſentence contains almoſt the whole of Chriſtianity; for to be filled with all knowledge of the will of God, in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding---to walk worthy of the Lord, unto all well pleaſing---to bring forth abundantly the fruits of good works---going on, continually increaſing in the knowledge of God---having the heart ſtrengthened with the glorious all-ſupporting power of divine love, ſo as to be ena-

bled to endure the various viciſſitudes and trials of life with all patience, and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs---to give thanks unto the Father, through the overflowing gratitude of the heart, becauſe he hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light---having tranſlated us out of the kingdom of darkneſs into that of his dear ſon---is, indeed, to be grateful from a conſciouſneſs, that, through the divine favour, we are made partakers of all we can poſſibly want to make us holy here and happy hereafter. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins. But who is able to ſpeak aright of theſe things? Who can fully deſcribe the riches of divine grace that theſe words contain? May the Father of mercies, by the enlightening operation of his ſpirit, open our underſtandings, and cauſe us ſpiritually to diſcern the greatneſs of his goodneſs, that we may indeed rejoice in his mercy, make known his truth, and live to his glory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

It is not only one of the beſt acquiſitions, in point of its conſequences, to know the will of God, but it is one of the moſt pleaſing: yet it is an acquirement no man can have any chance of obtaining, with any tolerable degree of perfection, without the Scriptures. If we take a ſurvey of mankind, we ſhall find that the ignorance of ſavage nations increaſes with every generation---the means of grace decreaſing as darkneſs increaſes. Their time is ſo much taken up in the obtaining of the neceſſaries of life, that little time is left to trace up, through a chain of evidence from the works of creation, the being of a God, and the knowledge of what he would have us to do, or to leave undone. It is therefore a great bleſſing to be poſſeſſed of the revealed word of divine truth; for from the Bible a man may, with eaſe, in a few days, learn more of the nature of the Deity, the government of his providence, and his will concerning us, than, without it, many ages could teach the moſt ſtudious of men. For therein we are taught what we ought to do, and examples are given to us, not only in the conduct of God, but alſo in the actions of men---the happineſs that ariſes from obedience is diſplayed in the moſt ſtriking light, as alſo the dreadful conſequences of diſobedience; no exaggeration, no falſe colouring, nothing unnatural heightens the ſcene, but all is ſimplicity, truth, and nature---all accords with the experience of all men---In it we have placed before us the promiſes of God, to animate us on our journey by holy hopes---hopes adapted to the deſires of every rational creature---ſuitable to the wiſhes of the moſt

ignorant

ignorant or moſt enlightened of men. In it are likewiſe the threatenings of God---awful in their nature, but ſuitable to correct the ſinner, and ſufficient to deter all who rightly underſtand them, from doing that which is evil---and all is written in the plaineſt language; ſuch, that any man, poſſeſſing plain common ſenſe, may fully comprehend. If the folly and wickedneſs of mankind had not caſt a veil of obſcurity, by miſtranſlation, ſpiritualizing, and myſtery, over the word of God, vaſt loads of annotations and commentaries would never have been written---expoſitions which confound the ſimple beauties of truth, by multiplying words without wiſdom.

If it is a bleſſing to know the will of God, how much more bleſſed is it to be filled with *the knowledge of his will in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding!* The natural man receiveth not the things of the ſpirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned. Of what little avail, therefore, is it to the natural man to be in poſſeſſion of the will of God, ſince, it being contrary to all his purſuits, quite oppoſite to all thoſe things from which he expects his happineſs, all its precepts, hopes, and fears are diſregarded as fooliſhneſs: unbelief hides the beauties of divine truth from him; he follows the carnal purſuits of his appetites, and reliſhes not ſpiritual enjoyments. He therefore muſt be in poſſeſſion of all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding, to know the power of truth, and to reliſh it. For as the members of the body have each their corporeal faculty of hearing, ſeeing, taſting, and ſmelling, any of which being perverted by diſeaſe or habit, the right exerciſe of that faculty is deſtroyed, until the evil that is in it is corrected—even ſo it is with regard to the mental faculties. Of what ſervice is the poſſeſſion of the Scriptures to that man who regards them, as a ſealed or a uſeleſs book? The having the will of God in his poſſeſſion is of no benefit to him if he never examines it; it is a large fortune in the poſſeſſion of a man who neglects wealth, and conſiders it as an uſeleſs thing. In like manner, to be filled with all knowledge of the word of truth, without having this knowledge in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding, would be an uſeleſs poſſeſſion. Of what avail would it be to know the letter of the word from the beginning of Geneſis to the end of the Revelations, without loving that word, and wiſely applying it to increaſe our faith, encourage our hopes, give greater fervor to our love, regulate our actions, and to bow down and ſubdue every high and lofty thought in full obedience to God? Without all this the word

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of divine truth in the head, is like riches in the poſſeſſion of a miſer, who has not the heart to make uſe of them: inſtead of a reward being obtained by his ſuperior knowledge, it will only increaſe his condemnation.

Not being filled with the knowledge of the will of God, in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding, is the reaſon that many, who have been well acquainted with the outward letter of Scripture, and have talked much about it, and have even obeyed ſome of its commands, and been looked upon by the world as Chriſtians, have nevertheleſs turned away into infidelity. They never had entered into the ſpirit of Chriſtianity; they had not become one with the Father and the ſon; their minds and their purſuits were not the ſame; they never had fully entered into the ſpirit of the truth: for if their heart had been engaged in the ſervice of God—if they had been filled with all wiſdom, and their whole ſpirit had entered into the underſtanding of it—how great, then, would have been their love to the word! how inconceivably precious, would that word have been unto them! Happy, truly ſo, is the man who finds this wiſdom, even the man who gets this ſpiritual underſtanding: for the merchandize of it is better than ſilver, and the gain thereof than fine gold; ſhe is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canſt deſire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her.

To be wiſe unto ſalvation, what a bleſſing! The Scriptures of truth are alone able to make us ſo. It is aſtoniſhing how they raiſe, open, refine, and exalt the underſtandings of thoſe who are converted by them, and read them diligently, entering into the ſpirit of them. I have been a happy witneſs of their efficacious power in enlightening the minds of thoſe who ſat in darkneſs. My eyes have beheld the men who, in their natural or unconverted ſtate, have, in their underſtanding, been but a degree above the brutes; but, having been brought to the knowledge of the truth, and to a reliſh of the word, have acquired an underſtanding that has aſtoniſhed their former acquaintance, and a nobility and dignity of manners, that has commanded the reſpect of mankind---the word of God has, indeed, poliſhed both body and mind, as well as ſpirit. Many indeed have been the inſtances of men, who, without natural gifts, without acquired knowledge, without eloquence

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of ſpeech, or elegance of manners, from no other ſource than the Scriptures, have been the happy inſtruments of turning many from darkneſs unto light, and from the ſervice of ſin and Satan to love and ſerve the only true God. This is the beſt proof that can be given of an improved wiſdom. The tree is known by its fruits---that underſtanding is brought to the higheſt degree of perfection that does moſt good: that man's underſtanding is the moſt valuably cultivated whoſe converſation tends moſt to the glory of God and the welfare of mankind.

But why are we to be deſirous of being *filled with all wiſdom?* Not to talk learnedly upon the truths of Scripture---not to be able to diſplay before the ſons of men the acquirements of our mind---but *that we may walk worthy of the Lord.* How great a thing is this! how deſirable is the attainment of it by a Chriſtian! Conſider how great is the Lord! how worthy to be feared, loved, revered, honoured, and obeyed. There is not one of you but can preach upon this part of my text. You all know what it is to walk worthy of the Lord; yea, there is not even a child here but knows what part of his conduct would be unworthy of his earthly parent, and would tend to caſt a reflection upon him for the education he had given him. You all know that lying, ſwearing, ſtealing, laſciviouſneſs, uncleanneſs, and every other vice, is unworthy of a Chriſtian. Not only outward acts of wickedneſs are unworthy of the Lord, but all wrong tempers, ſulkineſs, anger, wrath, malice, uncharitable or uncandid judgment---all theſe are not worthy of a Chriſtian: God is love! they are contrary to the nature of the Deity; they are unnatural in one looked upon as a child of God. In a wicked man they are natural, for they are diabolical tempers, and it is expected that the children of Satan ſhould poſſeſs them. But peace, and love, and joy, and righteouſneſs, belong to the diſciples of Jeſus; and that ſervant acts unworthy of his Lord, who does not poſſeſs them, and preſs daily after a more full attainment of them: but he that has the contrary tempers, or commits ſuch unworthy actions, ought not to make mention of the name of the Lord, leſt the unworthineſs of his conduct, ſhould, in the eyes of the world, caſt an odium upon his profeſſion, and tempt luke-warm profeſſors to ſin. When we reflect upon the holineſs of the character of Jehovah, we cannot but be aſtoniſhed at his forbearance in not puniſhing, by ſome awful judgment, ſuch ungodly profeſſors, that his own ſpotleſs character may be known to mankind.

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To *walk worthy of the Lord* is, in the whole of our conduct, to be holy, pure, free from evil in all our actions, peaceable, gentle, kind, affectionate in all our manners, virtuous, good, benevolent towards all men, living to the praise and glory of God our Father: thus did Jesus walk when upon earth; he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate in all his actions from the sinful conduct of the sons of men. His voice was not heard in vain disputations, noisy wranglings, and brawls, and quarrels; but he was peaceable in his conduct, gentle in his manners, tender-hearted, and full of pity, overflowing with affection, and the sincerest love, not only to those who loved him, but to his enemies; even to those who reviled him, spit upon him, scourged him, and crucified him. He was virtuous in all his conduct, and good in all his actions, and like God his father, whose tender mercies are continually streaming down upon the good and the evil; so was he, full of benevolence to all; and his outward actions were a constant manifestation of the benevolence of his heart, in continually going about doing good. Now, all who are called by the name of Christ, should walk even as he walked---worthy of the name of Christ, as he walked worthy of the name of God; commending our souls in well doing unto every man's conscience. He, therefore, that would walk worthy of the Lord, should make it his constant study, to regulate all his words and works by this noble principle---love to God the great creator of all things, with all the heart, the mind, and strength, and love to his neighbour as to himself.

That ye may walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing.——*Unto all pleasing* of God. Now God cannot be pleased with him who believes on the son of God, and yet obeys him not. We should not be pleased with a child, or servant, who knew our will, and yet neglected the doing it---and can God our father be pleased with us, if we have the knowledge of his will, and yet neglect to obey it? Unto all pleasing of God---No man can succeed in pleasing God and man in all his actions; and that Christian who would prefer man-pleasing to the pleasing of God, is guilty of a species of blasphemy against his Lord; blasting the fame of Jesus his master, by not causing his actions to reflect upon mankind the conduct of Christ Jesus. We speak not, therefore, as men-pleasers; but as pleasers of God, even of him who trieth the reins and the heart. If we please God, we shall please all that love God and know his will: we shall please the son of God, even him who gave himself a ransom for us; for whatsoever pleaseth the

the Father, pleaſeth the ſon; and all that you do that diſpleaſeth the ſon, diſpleaſeth the Father. If you love not Chriſt, and honour him not by your life and converſation, you muſt diſpleaſe the Father, who hath commanded all men to honour the ſon even as they honour the Father. If you do thus walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleaſing of God, you, by ſo doing, pleaſe not only the ſon of God, but all the holy angels, thoſe pure and ſpotleſs ſpirits, who continually miniſter before his throne; their voices are in your favour; they approve of your conduct, and ſpeak of your faith and obedience in the courts of heaven. All the ſaints of God will likewiſe be pleaſed with you; they will approve of your walk, and earneſtly deſire for the inrollment of your name amongſt the ſpiritual worſhippers of Jehovah, even the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect. The ſaints below, who know the will of the Lord, will approve of your conduct; they know that whoſoever doeth the will of God ſhall be accepted of him; they therefore take delight in ſeeing you walk, and in beholding your upright converſation. Thus heaven and earth ſmile upon you---the whole church, militant and triumphant, are pleaſed with you---when your walk is ſo worthy of your Chriſtian profeſſion, as to be pleaſing unto God. Thoſe who walk not worthy of their calling will not be pleaſed, neither will thoſe who oppoſe the goſpel: in all probability they will call your circumſpect conduct hypocriſy. But what could tempt you to hypocriſy? Nothing is to be expected from the world by the circumſpect Chriſtian, but contempt, ridicule, and reproach. Who would be an hypocritical Chriſtian for the pleaſure of being conſidered as the dirt and offscowering of the earth? And from God what could be expected by the hypocrite, but wrath and dreadful indignation? If men were to have ten thouſand pounds per annum for living a holy, devout, godlike, humble, benevolent, uſeful life, they might be tempted to be hypocrites; but where nothing is to be got, and much to be loſt, hypocriſy cannot be expected to be very common. Were men to be under the conſtant apprehenſion of the Inquiſition, in caſe they made not a profeſſion of Chriſtianity, they might be tempted to be hypocrites; but where the fear lays on the other ſide, and all the plans of pleaſure, honor, and profit are againſt it, hypocriſy is not a very probable thing. Seeing, then, that a man cannot gain any thing from the world by religion, but has much to endure, it is not likely that, for the pleaſure of enduring ſufferings, men ſhould become religious hypocrites; braving, for the ſcorn and reproach of mankind, the

awful indignation of offended Deity. Therefore, although I have heard many charges brought againſt people for religious hypocriſy, I believe them not, ſeeing that a man can get nothing by it; and that, when known, he would be hated by men in this life, and puniſhed by God in the next. Too preciſe a Chriſtian cannot be in his obedience, and in every action of his life, unleſs, indeed, he add traditions to the pure word, like the ſcribes and phariſees of old. When we conſider the temptations to which we are expoſed, in our friendſhip, our viſitings, buſineſſes, and amuſements, all call aloud unto us to watch---for we cannot love God too much, fear him more than we ought, or obey him too exactly.

But perhaps, ſome will ſay, If all my actions require ſuch conſtant attention to be paid them, I ſhall grow weary in my way: tired, and worn out with continual attention, perhaps I ſhall turn back into the world, and become an awful monument of divine juſtice. I am bold to tell thee, O doubting Chriſtian, if thine heart is right there is no danger; for the things of God are eternally new---they leave no empty vacuum of the mind to be filled up; but give thee conſtant employment, and increaſed pleaſure in the doing of it. Thou ſhalt have a peace in thy boſom that the world knoweth not of, and pleaſures that they cannot enjoy. When death hath cloſed thine eyes, and thou art admitted into the great family of the firſt-born, thou wilt find, that when ten thouſand years have rolled away, with all thy increaſed wiſdom, thou wilt find thyſelf but as an infant in point of knowledge; the powers of thy mind ſtill expanding and ſtretching forward after the Deity: he is the great centre of attraction unto all his creatures, and he will continually find them increaſed employment---employment fully adapted to the increaſed knowledge of his will, thine enlarged heart, and improved faculties. But even here below, the more we walk worthy of the Lord, the ſtronger and ſtronger ſhall we continually grow; and the nearer we draw to the wiſhed for haven, the ſtronger ſhall we ſmell the perfumes that are wafted from the heavenly Canaan; and, with Paul of old, we ſhall long for a ſafe landing on that immortal ſhore.

" That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, *being fruitful in every good work.*" Some men, and they too profeſſors of the goſpel, ridicule the idea of good works; but the Scriptures, on the contrary, ſeem very partial to them; they talk much about them, and exhort, not barely to an occaſional good work, but to a being fruitful in every good work.

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If the goſpel did not find a Chriſtian employment, Satan ſoon would---he has a number of things pleaſing to the idle man, to fill up his time---cards, chit-chat, plays, and many things elſe, which if not ſin, are, at leaſt, near of kin to it; theſe invite the fleſhly paſſions of the human heart to the very borders of iniquity. To the man who loves God, time paſſes ſwiftly away in the doing his will. Whatever is done in obedience to the command of God is a good work; and to him who feels gratitude of heart to his Creator for the mercies of redeeming love, ſuch good works are truly grateful. He feels no aching void, no idle time tempts him into evil; between reading the Scripture, thinking on them, comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, performing his ſocial and relative duties, ſtudying hiſtory, biography, &c. &c. ſeeking out the diſtreſſed, comforting and relieving the afflicted, ordering his family, inſtructing them in their duties to God and man, and innumerable other *et cæteras*, he can find ſufficient employment in good works for the Chriſtian to perform, and fully to enable him to be fruitful in them. If he has any complaint, it is not of wanting employment, but of wanting time fully to enjoy the delightful employments he has to perform.

Good works are a ſource of continual exertion to the human mind; the man who will be fruitful in them, muſt join thought and action conſtantly together. The man who would be ſcripturally juſt, muſt do unto all men as he would wiſh them to do unto him. Eaſy as this duty ſeems at firſt ſight, upon examination we ſhall find that it requires us conſtantly to ſit in judgment upon all our actions, weighing all we do in the ſcales of juſtice---holding our ſelfiſh paſſions with a ſteady rein---and at laſt cauſing ſelf-love to decide againſt itſelf in favour of our neighbour.

Again, in our conduct of life, what activity of mind is required, leaſt while we are generous, we ſhould cauſe our good to be evil ſpoken of, by being unjuſt. Owe no man any thing, ſaith our Lord: if we rightly conſider this command, what a continual exertion of watchfulneſs would it cauſe, to enable us to bring forth the good works of obedience? What a guard muſt the generous mind put upon itſelf, leſt, like Saul of old, if ſhould prefer ſacrifice to obedience.

If negative good works require ſuch a cultivation of ſpirit, to make the Chriſtian fruitful, what muſt we ſay of the poſitive good works which the Chriſtian is called to perform, not leaving the others undone! Such as feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, viſiting the ſick, the priſoner, &c. ſearching daily

for opportunities of doing good, like God our heavenly Father and Jesus Christ our great example: and yet, after all these are done, a higher good work still remains to be performed, even the examination of our own hearts. This is indeed an arduous task---to know ourselves, to sit in judgment upon our whole conduct, to arraign ourselves at our own bar, and cause the word of God to sit in judgment upon all our actions, yea, even upon our thoughts and words, O my friends, did we do this daily, we should find many things to mend; many a wrong temper, and many a wrong action, that self-love had approved of, would then be held up to abhorrence, and turned from with shame.

Notwithstanding the activity of the human mind, it does not love self-correction; there it is lazy, even to sluggishness. Be advised---dare nobly to strive to shake off those idle tempers, that would keep you from overcoming yourself: once conquer these, and you will soon be victorious over every other temptation. Resist the devil, saith the apostle, and he will flee from you. Begin with thyself, thy habits, thy wrong propensities, thy peculiar temptations; these strong bulwarks of sin destroyed, and thy whole heart brought into full obedience to the word of truth, thou wilt, indeed, continually do the will of thy Father who is in heaven. But shouldest thou, O Christian, look back, like Lot upon Zoar, with an eye of pity, and say within thine heart, of the least of thy sins, Suffer it to live; let me enjoy it; lo! is it not a little one? Soon shalt thou find, that the pleasing phantom is of speedy growth, and of such increasing power, that his gigantic arms are capable of entwining chains so strong about thee, that thine utmost resolution cannot break them.

That you may be fitted to the performance of good works, let me exhort you, as Paul did Timothy, to give yourselves to meditation. This is, indeed, one of the hardest and most difficult of tasks: My people do not know, said Jehovah of old; and he gives this as a reason for their ignorance---they do not consider.---The want of consideration occasions ignorance. Would men meditate on the commands, on the threatenings, on the examples of divine truth---would they consider the wisdom of God in foretelling, and his faithfulness in performing---would they meditate on his promises, see their greatness and their glory, and by faith realize them, they would indeed lay in such a stock of mental ability, with such an anxious desire to please God, as would make them fruitful in every good work. Yes, Christian! never more wouldst thou be

be heard complaining of idle time, of want of employment, of emptineſs of mind, or making any of the frivolous excuſes that ignorance makes, idleneſs takes hold of, and folly pleads in her behalf. But, on the contrary, a ſomething would be before thee; a reality, grand, beautiful, and ſatisfactory; time would never hang heavy upon thine hands; between ſupplying the wants of nature, performing the neceſſary duties of life, enlightening thine underſtanding, and communicating thy knowledge, thou wouldſt have enough to do, and thou wouldſt do it with delight.

" Being fruitful in every good work, *and increaſing in the knowledge of God.*" The unhappy cauſe of the various ſects of Chriſtians, is their not paying obedience to this precept.--- Every ſect has ſome part of truth, but none have the whole of divine truth: they ſeem to reaſon as if they could not go forward in making additions to their preſent ſtock of knowledge. Surely, as the child that has learned his alphabet may be taught ſpelling, reading, ſcience, and go on in learning to ten times the age of man, without having gone a thouſandth part through even his poſſible human acquirements, ſo might the Chriſtian, daily, even through an eternity, go on increaſing in the knowledge of God---by growth in the knowledge of that which he ſaith, and hath ſaid, doeth, hath done, and ſtill will do. Oh for the arrival of that happy day when ſpiritual pride, and party zeal being deſtroyed, the knowledge of the Lord ſhall cover the earth as the waters cover the ſea!

Chriſtian friends, when we conſider the infirmities of human nature, we muſt acknowledge it is indeed a great thing for us to know the perfections of the Deity! His omnipreſence—" Whither ſhall I go from thy ſpirit? whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence? If I aſcend up into heaven thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the ſea, even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me." Aſtoniſhing thought! who can comprehend the omnipreſence of Deity! Local beings as we are, when we only think of it, we are filled with amazement, and loſt in the contemplating of the magnitude of our meditation.

Contemplate the omnipotence of that Being who formed an inſect, and with the ſame hands machined the vaſt orrery of nature! The more we are acquainted with geography, by bringing us to an intimate acquaintance with the earth, the more will it fill us with ſolemn awe, when we meditate on his almighty

almighty power who formed the earth, the ſea, and their various innumerable inhabitants. But lift up thine eyes, O man! behold the ſolar orb, and the earth with all the planets dancing each their diurnal round; whilſt the comets take their unknown courſes, according to his appointment, and the ſtellar lights bind up and encloſe the whole machine. Truly the heavens declare thy mighty power, O Jehovah! and the vaſt expance proclaimeth the omnipotence of thine arm. Thou alone doeſt what thou wilt in hell, in earth, and heaven; and all the hoſts that inhabit them obey thy will. Wonderful art thou in power, O my God! who ſhall dare to ſay to thee on any occaſion, Wherefore doeſt thou thus?

The contemplation of the power of God ſhould lead us to ſtand in awe of him, and not to deviate from his commands. It ſhould lead us to conſider the continual poſſibility of his faithfulneſs. Is any thing too hard for the power of that God who formed all things? What a ſource of delight is the contemplating the power of Jehovah, as manifeſted in the workmanſhip of his hands! I pity the ignorant man, who ſaunters about complaining of having nothing to do, when the vaſt field of nature lays open before him, invites him to the contemplation of the beauty of its parts, and the aſtoniſhing arrangement and combination of the whole. Surely the man who can trifle away his hours in ſhuffling pieces of paper together, or ſits gaping at the ſight of nature burleſqued, whilſt the works of his Creator lie unheeded before him, ſurely ſuch a man can have but an infant ſoul! The iron hand of adverſity muſt teach him to think, ere he can ſit down with the firſt-born ſons of Jeſus, to enjoy the wonderful works of the great Firſt Cauſe of all, the Father of Spirits.

Reflect upon the wiſdom of God; examine thine own form, thine arms, thine head, thy body, thy legs; ſurvey their ſymmetry; how beautiful! and at the ſame time how perfectly adapted for uſefulneſs! Examine the unſeen parts, the arteries, the veins, the pores; conſider the heart, the lights, the liver, the kidneys; take notice of the muſcles, that give ſtrength to every member, and the elaſtic ligatures, which give motion whilſt they tie each various part together. Curiouſly and wonderfully art thou made, O man! what wiſdom has the Great Architect manifeſted in the formation of thy body!----- But riſe above the mechaniſm of thy outward form; examine thy mind, its powers of retention, of thought, of judgment, how aſtoniſhing! how ſurpaſſing knowledge is man! Examine his wiſdom, manifeſted in the bridges, houſes, palaces, bulwarks,

warks, he has built. Behold the ſtately veſſel, proudly ſailing on the ocean, and bidding defiance to the rude tempeſt. This was the workmanſhip of man. If he is ſo wiſe, how infinite muſt he be in wiſdom, who formed him, and millions of ſuch creatures! endowing them all with intellectual powers. Deſcend from man, examine the beauty of the minuteſt inſect, how exactly fitted for its end are all its parts. It is the workmanſhip of infinite wiſdom; his creation teems with life; every part ſo combined by his infinite wiſdom, that like links in a chain, each depends upon the other, and the whole upon him, the great Firſt Cauſe and Laſt End of all things. Its order proclaims the wiſdom of its Maker, and the excellency of his government.

But how great is his goodneſs! God is love! his tender mercies are over all his works; he loveth every thing that he hath made; his mercy endureth to the future age; to that age of jubilee when there ſhall not be occaſion for Jehovah to exercile his mercy; for as mercy is the going forth of compaſſion in comforting a creature under diſtreſs, the period will come when there will not be a creature under diſtreſs, to whom Jehovah can ſhew mercy: for when all his creatures are ſubdued by Chriſt---when he hath reconciled all things, whether they be of heavenly or earthly original, by the blood of the croſs---when, by the blood of the covenant, he hath brought forth all the priſoners out of that pit in which there is no water, then will God be all in all, in every creature; his will will be the rule of government; every heart will be in his image; the whole ſpirit of every creature whom God hath created, will be conformed to the image of his ſon. God the Creator will look upon all things that he hath made, behold their beauty, their order, their harmony; and his mercy, which now goeth forth in acts of compaſſion, will then be changed into affection, delight, love; God will indeed be all in all, and all his creatures will be in him.

But as this glorious period hath not yet arrived, behold, O Chriſtian! the goodneſs of that God, who, in the conduct of his providence, openeth wide his liberal hand, and all things living are filled with plenteouſneſs. When we but conſider the magnitude of London, its numerous inhabitants, upon what various cauſes depend the ſupply of their food, how innumerably many links there are in the chain that keepeth them together, and giveth them food to eat and raiment to put on, we muſt confeſs it is his hand alone which keepeth the chain unbroken, and preventeth peſtilence, famine, and death. Extend

tend thy ſurvey; compriſe within thy view the wants of a nation, nay, the wants of a world, and its infinitely innumerable inhabitants. Reduce thy ſurvey, conſider the hand of that God who hath hitherto helped thee, O man! Perhaps thou art hoary headed, and he hath led thee through the weakneſs of infancy, the follies of youth, the independance of manhood, and here thou art ſtill after all thy cares, doubts, fears, dangers, follies, weakneſs, ſins; I ſay, here thou art, a monument of his goodneſs, the child of his providence, the dependant on his bounty. His goodneſs has perhaps led thee to think again on thy rebellion and his love, and taught thee not to truſt on man, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils, but on the living God; he ſupplieth thy wants, and giveth thee that peace which the world knoweth not of. Chriſtian, thou oughteſt indeed to join in the apoſtle's prayer, and ſay, Increaſe us in the knowledge of thee, O God.

"Strengthened with all might." We are all weakneſs and helpleſſneſs of ourſelves: unable to think, or ſpeak, or act aright, but through the mighty power of our God. Was it not for his communicated power, we ſhould be able to do indeed but little; but God ſtrengthens us with all might; it is this that ſupports us in the midſt of doubts, and fears, and temptations; it is this that enables us to riſe above them, and to come off conquerors: for we can do all things through Chriſt who ſtrengthens us.

"According to his glorious power." And ſhall we then doubt the poſſibility of our ſucceſs in our ſpiritual warfare? Is any thing too hard for Jehovah? Is there any beſetting ſin which, through his glorious power, we cannot overcome? Is there any evil which, being under his protection, we need to fear? It is confidence in this glorious power that renders the religious man conſiſtent in his character and conduct. Who can tell the greatneſs of this power! May you, my friends, be ſtrengthened with all might, to overcome every evil, according to the greatneſs of this glorious power, by which you are ſupported, and this ſhall enable you to act aright in every Chriſtian duty, which otherwiſe you would be unable to perform.

"Unto all patience and long ſuffering with joyfulneſs." Conſcious weakneſs fills a man with fear; it unmans, and takes away even the real ſtrength that a man has: but when a man has ſtrength, and knows it, he can patiently bear the ſcoffs and taunts of mankind. Impatience is a proof of cowardice, and cowardice of real or ſuppoſed weakneſs: the Chriſtian, therefore,

fore, who is ſtrengthened with all might according to the mighty power of God, muſt manifeſt it by his patience in all the afflictions and croſs providences of life, and by his long forbearance, with joyfulneſs, under the contradiction both of ſaints and ſinners: for it is the temper of Chriſtianity that muſt manifeſt the reality of it: without theſe it is all emptineſs; ſound without ſenſe; not the light but the ridicule of mankind.

Glorious is the power of Jehovah; it is infinite, but glorious, becauſe its exertions are always directed by goodneſs. How wonderfully great doth that power manifeſt itſelf to be in the ſalvation of fallen man! But it is equally glorious, becauſe the act caſts a ray of ſplendour upon the character of Deity that would not otherwiſe have been viſible. In vain would fallen creatures have ſtrove to riſe above their loſt eſtate to a ſtate of purity and holineſs, unaided by the divine power; but the exerciſe of that power, through the medium of Chriſt Jeſus, will not only now ſave the firſt-born, the elect of God, but will finally reſtore all fallen creatures to a ſtate of perfection that ſhall make the power of Jehovah appear truly glorious: for the whole creation, in all its parts, anſwering the wiſe and benevolent purpoſes of its good Creator, ſhall give glory to his name by its beauty, harmony, and love.

God, who has this glorious power, is much readier to beſtow it upon us than we are to aſk it of him. He waiteth to be gracious; he treaſures up the bounties of his hand, that he may liberally beſtow them upon all his children who feel their wants and come with faith unto him: he rejecteth none; and whenſoever two or three are met together in the name of Jeſus Chriſt his ſon, what things ſoever they agree to aſk the Father in his name, believing, they ſhall receive.

It is greatly to our ſatisfaction to know if we have this power or have it not; we are not left to the doubts and uncertain feelings of our hearts, which may be too often excited or depreſſed by outward circumſtances, or even by the food which we eat: we know that we are the children of God when we do his will; we are confident that we are partakers of this mighty power when we can do thoſe things which we before could not do; and I know that I have this power, becauſe I preach the goſpel, the good news of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, unto you: for none can preach the goſpel unleſs he is ſent.----- Confident that I preach the goſpel, I own the authority from whence I preach it; not in my own ſtrength, but becauſe I am ſtrengthened, for this purpoſe, with all might, according to his

glorious power, unto all patience, and long suffering, with joyfulness.

Do you love God? There was a time when you did not love him. Whence, then, ariseth the difference in your tempers between what you now are, and what you then was? Is it by the exercise of your reason, or by the mighty power of God? Do you love the people of God? This also is by his mighty power; for as we were enemies to God by wicked works, so we hated all that loved him and were obedient unto him.----- Do you love your enemies? No natural man can do this. If, then, you do more than others, it is God alone that gives you this power, to reduce the precepts of religion to practice, and make the speculative opinions of the highest degree of human virtue to be a certainty, nay, enabling you even to rise high above them, soaring aloft on the wings of holy obedience, daily drawing nearer and nearer to the perfections of Deity.--- The knowledge of my spiritual state is not an imaginary thing; it ariseth not from certain infatuated feelings of a mind inflated by fancy, but it ariseth from the full exercise of the judgment. I know that I please God, and that he approveth of my conduct, and hath caused my name to be written in the book of life, when I am conscious that I keep his commands, and that I am enabled by him to do those things which no natural man can possibly perform without that power which cometh from above; but, as that power is ever ready to be bestowed upon all who ask for it, it is no disadvantage to man that it must come from God.

Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. There is an inheritance for us with the saints in light; but we must be made meet for the enjoyment of it. It is a glorious inheritance---an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation. This inheritance the apostle Peter had such glorious ideas of, that he says, " Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." Our Lord likewise speaks of this inheritance, John, xiv. " Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place

place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo." Paul likewiſe lived in holy expectation of a part in this inheritance of the ſaints in light. "For (ſaith he, 2 Cor. v. 1.) we know that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Again, ſpeaking concerning Abraham, Heb. xi. 10. he ſays, he looked for a city which hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God. The holy men of old ſpeak in the moſt exalted human language of this inheritance. They call it a crown of life and glory, a ſceptre of righteouſneſs, a city whoſe builder is God, a kingdom that cannot be moved, all denoting its ſtability, its dignity, its power; the meaneſt of theſe deſcriptions exalts the conſequence of the inheritance, and repreſents the ſmaller portion in it as of greater value than all the preſent kingdoms of the earth; for like the paſſing ſhadows they flit away, but this inheritance hath Jehovah himſelf for its founder, and his unchanging promiſe for its ſupport.

None who believe in the Scriptures can diſpute the reality of this inheritance; it was the hope of the patriarchs, prophets, apoſtles, and martyrs, and is now the animating hope of every ſincere believer. At all times light hath been ſown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. They have not, as yet, beheld this light; they have not experienced this joy; clouds and darkneſs have overſhadowed their ways; hope alone has, with a glimmering light, illumined their ſteps; but on the millenial morn, when the ſun of righteouſneſs ſhall ariſe, then ſhall the clouds diſperſe, the darkneſs ſhall flee away, and with joy and gladneſs of heart ſhall they receive, at the hands of their Lord, the rewards he hath prepared for all that love and fear his name, and patiently wait for his appearance.

As this is a real inheritance, ſo there is a meetneſs requiſite for the taking poſſeſſion, and for the enjoyment thereof. The God that hath created the ſun, moon, and ſtars, that formed this earth, and hath cloathed all nature with beauties, hath given man ſuch faculties of body and mind, as may enable him to improve the beauties of nature, and to encreaſe his enjoyment with his improvements; inducing man, by motives of intereſt, to exert himſelf in the cultivation of the powers of his mind, that, by uſeful arts and ſciences, he may be enabled the better to enjoy the luxuriant bleſſings that his beneficent Maker hath beſtowed; and all this only for a few fleeting days! The hand that formed the mighty monuments of art, ſeeth them at fartheſt but for a few rolling years, and then they

pafs for ever from his view. The fame God that hath given to nature fuch a profufion of beauties, and to his creature man fuch a capability of improvement and enjoyment for fo fmall a fpace of time, hath furely prepared fuperior beauties for a future ftate—beauties that will require more perfect faculties and higher attainments to enjoy them, feeing that his hand hath formed them to be the enjoyment of ages by the faints in light. As the concerns of the foul are fuperior to thofe of the body, fo muft the fpiritual inheritance be fuperior to thefe temporal bleffings. But however beautiful, however defirable, they cannot be enjoyed unlefs we are made meet for that inheritance.

Luke xx. 35. our Lord fpeaks of thofe that fhall be accounted worthy to obtain that age, and the refurrection from the dead; ftrongly implying, that of profeffors there are many that fhall not be accounted worthy to have any part in that inheritance, nor even to be amongft the number of thofe who fhall fhare in the firft refurrection. Now by comparing thefe paffages together we fhall find that worthinefs and meetnefs are the fame thing; it is, in fact, a fitnefs for the inheritance.

1ft. A fitnefs for the enjoyment of the inheritance.

2dly. A fitnefs to perform the duties thereof.

A fitnefs for the enjoyment of the inheritance, implies that the mind of the inheritor is capable of enjoying the inheritance of the faints in light; that his temper of mind, and all his purfuits are like theirs. This is a philofophical propofition.—Of what ufe would be the beauties of nature to the blind man? or all the nobleft ftrains that mufic could produce to the deaf? In like manner what pleafure could the fpiritual enjoyments of the kingdom of Chrift yield to the carnal mind? As I cannot live in fire, unlefs my nature is changed, fo I could not live in the enjoyments of heaven unlefs my heart was changed—— unlefs I had a mind fully adapted to the pleafures and purfuits of the place. With the heart of Satan, heaven would be hell to any one; but change that heart, let it not be the accufer but the lover of the brethren---not the adverfary, but the willing fubject of Chrift, and heaven would be indeed heaven, and all its glories would be defirable. In like manner, if you are meet to enjoy the inheritance of the faints of light, you muft be a fon of peace, have a heart of love, with a life of holinefs; for in this inheritance, there is no hatred, envy, animofity, or contempt; no irreverence, or neglect of the worfhip of God, But every knee bows down to him, every heart adores him---- all is peace, and joy, and righteoufnefs.

God

God has indeed prepared an inheritance for us, and we muſt be made meet for the inheritance. Now it is impoſſible that we ſhould be thus meet unleſs God hath cleanſed our hearts---unleſs we have the ſpirit of God formed within us. But although the work is of God, we ought not to be diſcouraged, ſeeing that he is a God hearing and anſwering prayer---a God near at hand to all that call upon him.

If God hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light, we ought to give thanks unto him, for it is an inheritance worth the enjoying: and we were in time paſt enemies unto God by our wicked works; but he hath made us meet by making us partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt. We therefore ought to give thanks unto him, and bleſs him continually for his goodneſs, in having called us out of darkneſs into light.

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs. Great, awfully ſo, is the power of darkneſs! Men, dwelling under the influence of the enlightening truth of Scripture, know not the greatneſs thereof; but were they to take a ſurvey of thoſe heathen countries where revelation is not known, they would ſtand aſtoniſhed and terrified at its oppreſſive influence: for they dread the power of Satan, whom they call the Evil Spirit, whom they fondly think rules over them like a God; and this is the reaſon that moſt ſavage nations pay more homage to him out of fear, than to God, their good Creator, out of love. If aſked the reaſon, they readily anſwer, that he is always ready to injure them, and they therefore find it neceſſary to deprecate his wrath: but they are not under the like neceſſity of deprecating the Good Spirit, becauſe he loves not to injure them, but at all times delights to do them good.

When we look back upon paſt ages, and notice the terror that ſhook the hearts of men, from the powers of darkneſs, and their conſequent ſuperſtitious reverence of witches, wizards, necromancers, and all the numerous train of thoſe who practiſed the black art, we cannot but obſerve the power of darkneſs on the human mind, and the infinite obligation we are under to the Father for the gift of his ſon, who has, by the goſpel of our ſalvation, almoſt baniſhed all ſuch terrors from the Chriſtian world. As the light of truth ſpreads, the ſhades of error flee away, and ſhall continue to flee, till truth, by the brightneſs of its ſhining, filleth the whole univerſe with light and glory. Then men ſhall no more fear the powers of darkneſs,

neſs, but they ſhall rejoice in the light continually, and give conſtant praiſe to that God from whom it flows.

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs. Paul obſerves, that his ſervants we are whom we obey; we acknowledge the authority of that ſovereign whoſe laws we keep----- When, therefore, we are the ſervants of ſin, having the mind covered with obſcurity, and all our future expectations full of doubts and fears, and all our preſent enjoyments perverted, looking for happineſs in the error of our ways, in following our corrupted inclinations in ſearch of good; being led captive by Satan at his will; we are then indeed, truly ſubject to the power of darkneſs, which leads us to the doing of things contrary to our better knowledge. And this is one reaſon why I cannot admit the doctrine of philoſophical neceſſity: the friends of it aſſert that the mind of man always acts from the ſtrongeſt motive. Now I conceive that the ſinner acts ſinfully becauſe he is under the power or influence of a darkened mind; for the motives he has to do good are, if poſſible, infinitely ſtronger than the motives to do evil, and that even in thoſe who commit iniquity: to do good we are led by the pleaſures which ariſe from the approbation of our conſcience, by the benefits that mankind receive from it, and which muſt, even in this life, return back with tenfold advantage upon ourſelves: add to this, the good, in all its various ramifications, that branches out from every virtuous deed, with the various promiſes of future advantage that keep towering one above another, till the eye of faith itſelf, looking through the teleſcope of truth, is loſt in the contemplation of them—Yet with all theſe motives to action, behold the innumerable hoſts of the ſons of men who have the word of truth in their poſſeſſion, and yet commit iniquity with greedineſs: it is not from the ſtrongeſt motive for action, but from the weakeſt, owing to darkneſs having overſhadowed their mind, and their perverted imaginations not being able to penetrate the thick obſcure, or break aſunder its weighty chains. Since, then, I have every impulſive motive to do good, and none to do evil but a momentary gratification, I cannot but conclude that I am under the power of darkneſs: and would to God, that we all could ſay, this was the whole cauſe of our ſinning, and not be under the neceſſity of adding, that we, by giving way to iniquity, are, at the ſame time, under the power of moral depravity.

But

But bleſſed be God, he hath given us his ſon, that we may be delivered from the power of darkneſs; and we are not more ſenſible of eating and drinking, than we were of being delivered from the clouds and thick darkneſs which overſhadowed our ſpiritual underſtanding, before that we received the knowledge of divine truth, by faith in Chriſt Jeſus. I well remember the time when light pierced through the clouds, and darkneſs fled away: I felt new power—freſh ſtrength ſeemed to be imparted from above: the things that I before could not perform now ſeemed very eaſy: the chains that before bound my ſoul now ſeemed broken: I beheld the love of God, like an overflowing ſtream, rolling on, and flowing through his vaſt creation: I felt the force of divine faithfulneſs comforting and animating my ſoul; I heard it whiſper to my heart, *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love.* How forcibly then did divine goodneſs ſtrike my heart, and call forth all its grateful affections to my God! I felt, I knew, that I loved God better than I loved my father, or mother, or wife, or any other relation; all the endearing ties of fraternal affection and human friendſhip gave way to the love of my God. There was nothing but what I could do or ſuffer for his ſake. Was not this a ſenſible deliverance from the power of darkneſs? Inſtead of living to gratify my paſſions, I now ſaw the end of my exiſtence, and rejoiced in living to the glory of my God. Inſtead of being filled with wrath and malice, and every evil temper, to be able to love my greateſt enemies! Oh! it was a change ſurpaſſing all my expectations! It was indeed a deliverance that filled my ſoul with righteouſneſs, peace, and joy. Now, my brethren, do you know theſe things? Is the power of darkneſs broken from your minds? Can you love the Lord your God with all your heart, ſoul, and ſtrength, and your neighbour as yourſelf? Do you do good to all, and pray for all? If ſo, then you are delivered from the powers of darkneſs, and tranſlated into the kingdom of his dear ſon.

The kingdom of his dear ſon. This is not a kingdom of this world, but a kingdom called out of the world; a kingdom that owneth Jeſus of Nazareth to be the anointed of the Father and their king: whatſoever he hath commanded, that alone is eſtabliſhed in this kingdom as the law; that alone which he hath forbidden, they avoid. None are conſidered as the ſubjects of this kingdom, becauſe they attend this or the other church or chapel, or are runners after the goſpel miniſters of the day---or for belonging to this, that, or the other denomination of Chriſtians---or for eating, or drinking, or abſtinence---or the obſerva-

obſervation of days, but obedience to the faith, conſtitutes the character of a ſubject of this kingdom, and this ſubject hath aionian life; for this is aionian life, to know the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt, the anointed ſaviour, whom he hath ſent.--- Now the fulneſs of aionian life is a fulneſs of ſubmiſſion of all creation to Jeſus---a bowing of the knee to him, and owning him to be the ruler, to the glory of God the Father. The man, therefore, who is tranſlated into the kingdom of Chriſt, and hath aionion life begun in him, that man bows the knee to Chriſt---he has within him the holy leaven, which ſhall keep fermenting until every thought ſhall be brought into full ſubjection to the divine will.

In whom we have redemption, through his blood, even the remiſſion of ſins. Was it not for this, I ſhould live without hope for myſelf, and for you, my brethren; nor ſhould I have any hope for any of the ſons of men. I am under the neceſſity of conſidering all men as ſinners; both Jew and gentile; all are gone aſtray---none doeth good, no, not one. What is there in nature that could cauſe me to ſee a God reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing unto them their treſpaſſes and ſins? What arguments could I uſe to reclaim men from the error of their ways? But bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, he hath given his ſon to be a ranſom for all; and ye, who now believe in him have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins. There is not one upon earth but needs pardon for the ſins that are paſt, and that pardon comes through Chriſt alone. There is no other name given, but the name Jeſus, by which men can be ſaved. It is he that died for us, and who has riſen again for our juſtification; and whoſoever believeth on his name, ſetteth his ſeal to God's veracity; he is redeemed by the blood of Chriſt; he has the juſtification that cometh by faith: to that man God will not impute iniquity, but he caſteth all his ſins behind his back. Seeing, therefore, that God hath ſet forth his ſon as a propitiation for our ſins, let us, having by faith embraced that ſalvation which he has held out in Chriſt Jeſus, walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleaſing, being fruitful in every good word and work, and increaſing in the knowledge of God.

END OF THE EIGHTH SERMON.

SERMON IX.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

ACTS, VIII. 33.

In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth.

THIS verse is a quotation from Isaiah, liii. but in this place loses all its beauty by its incorrectness. Bishop Lowth, in this, as well as in many other places, has rendered Christianity a considerable service by rectifying the errors of our translators of the Old Testament. This passage he renders thus:

> "By an oppressive judgment he was taken off;
> And his manner of life who shall declare?
> For he was cut off from the land of the living."

The word judgment has two significations in the English language: 1. It signifies *understanding* or *reason*; that faculty of the mind by which a man wisely determines any thing; hence it is said concerning one half-witted, He is quite a fool; or concerning any one who speaks of that which he doth not understand, it is said, How simply such an one talks! he speaks irrationally; he utters his words upon this business without judgment. Of such a character it is written, "A fool is known by his much speaking;" but of the contrary character, that "he speaks not of things beyond his reach." In this sense none who read of the calm, determined self-possession of our Lord, when at the judgment-seat, can suppose that Luke

the hiſtorian uſes theſe words. In his humiliation it is evident, that, how great ſoever were his ſufferings, yet his judgment was not taken from him: no; he had the full poſſeſſion of his rational faculties, and in the exerciſe of them witneſſed "a good confeſſion before Pontius Pilate;" he bore his teſtimony to the truth with that dignity and heroic fortitude which became him as the ſon of God.

2. Judgment is taken for a ſentence paſſed upon any man or thing. An oppreſſive judgment is that ſentence which overbearing power, unduly exerciſed, paſſes unjuſtly upon unprotected innocence; whilſt a juſt judgment is an upright determination, paſſed after a full and righteous inveſtigation: it is in this ſenſe that it is ſaid, that an unrighteous judge taketh a gift, which blindeth the eyes of the wiſe; making him, for filthy lucre's ſake, examine only one ſide of the caſe before him, perverting the cauſe of the fatherleſs and widow, and cruſhing the poor beneath the terrors of oppreſſive law. In this ſenſe, but with a good meaning, it is propheſied concerning the Meſſiah, that

"He ſhall judge thy people with righteouſneſs,
And thy poor with judgment,"

It is in this ſenſe the hiſtorian uſes this quotation---"In his humiliation his judgment was taken away;" his righteous judgment; that upright ſentence which an upright bench would have paſſed upon an innocent perſon, was, by an oppreſſive judgment, illegally taken away, in ſuch a manner, that none could appear at the unjuſt tribunal to teſtify his manner of life, his innocence of conduct, his wiſdom, his gentleneſs, his purity, his goodneſs; for the arm of iniquity was lifted up againſt him, and his life was ſwept away from the earth.

The firſt thing that ſtrikes our attention in theſe words is, that Chriſt went through a ſhort but ſuffering ſtate of humiliation: ſhort, indeed, was his life, but great, exceedingly great, his humiliation! on account of the grandeur of his birth---the firſt-born of creation, the only begotten ſon of the Father---as alſo for the glory, the dignity, the ſupreme excellency of his perſon; for by him, and for him, were all things created, however elevated above the ſons of men in majeſty and honour, or how low ſoever beneath the lofty ſituation of man in their nature, and in their weakneſs---notwithſtanding their excellency or their meanneſs, it was his hand that formed them, and for his government were they created. He was the elect of God, in whom his ſoul delighted; who dwelt in his boſom before angels were formed, or this lower nature was, by the fiat

fiat of almighty power, called forth into exiſtence. How great, therefore, was his humiliation!

" Borne on the wings of boundleſs love,
He left th'eternal throne on high;
Our low degraded ſtate to prove,
With man to mourn, for man to die."

He did not degrade his heavenly dignity by condeſcending to be cloathed in the gaudy decorations of human power, but uncloathing himſelf of all power, he made himſelf of no reputation, without name, wealth, or authority, and took upon himſelf the form of a ſervant, that form which required ſtrict and conſtant obedience; and being thus found amongſt his own people, whom he had called out of the world, amongſt his brethren after the fleſh, faſhioned as a man like themſelves, they knew him not as the ſon of God; they received him not as the Chriſt, the Meſſiah, the anointed of God; and he, in this humiliation of himſelf, to fulfil the will of his Father, and become unto us an example of obedience, became himſelf obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs, ſtretched with limbs extended to the accurſed tree, and rivetted to the deadly ſpot by nails penetrating the tender nerves, and all his body ſuſpended by and ſuſtained on his wounded members; dying, for hours dying, not by weakneſs of conſtitution, or a diſordered nature, but by an overwhelming exceſs of pain!

Great indeed had been his prior humiliation! The higheſt ſtate of human dignity was degradation of ſituation to the ſon of God; but that degradation was carried on in him from the womb to the grave. The ſon of David to be born in a ſtable! At twelve years of age, with a wiſdom of ſpeech that aſtoniſhed the learned, and growing in wiſdom; ſo that at years of maturity when he ſpake his enemies were forced to confeſs, that no man ſpake like him; yet notwithſtanding his mental ability, he, on whoſe lips the multitudes hung with aſtoniſhment, even he, wandered about ſupported by the hand of pity! the ſcorn of the wiſe, and the ridicule of the profligate---without a place he could call his own, or a ſhelter for his head from the inclement ſtorm. Spotleſs in his innocence, the eye of malice could not find a flaw in his character, yet was he accuſed of blaſphemy, of gluttony, of drunkenneſs, and of treaſon; and at laſt, condemned on unproved charges, and crucified contrar to the laws of his country; he was numbered with the tranſgreſſors; his life was cut off from the earth.

The greatneſs of the humiliation of Chriſt is moſt viſible when the dignity of his perſon is contraſted with the abject

ſtate to which he was reduced. Man is born to ſorrow. It is neceſſary for the infant ruler to be trained in the ſchool of adverſity; he muſt learn wiſely to govern by his own----often ſad----experience. But in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt were hidden ſuch treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, that he not only could create worlds innumerable, and filled with animation, but he could, nay had for ages, ſat upon the throne of government, ruling them with underſtanding; for him, therefore, to lay aſide the radiant glories of etherial dignity---for him, the repreſentative of the immortal and inviſible Deity---for him, who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God: for him, I ſay, to lay by his government, and to take upon him the form of a ſubject—to be obedient, even obedient unto death, unto the moſt degrading, the moſt cruel of deaths! Oh! this was humiliation! humiliation ſurpaſſing the attainment of any rational creature, from the higheſt angel who treads the realms above, to man, the Lord of all this world below. Far, infinitely far beneath him in dignity, they never could, by immeaſureable lengths, reach that humiliation which the ſon of God underwent.

What adds greatly to the glory of Chriſt, in his humiliation is, that it was voluntary. No power in heaven, earth, or hell, could have dethroned him. He might have exclaimed,

> " League all your forces, all ye pow'rs above,
> And with you let the whole creation move,
> Ye ſtrive in vain. If I but ſpeak the word,
> The fiat of the Deity is heard:
> And, terror ſtruck, ye lay before your Lord.

Even when he had deſcended from the throne of creation, and humbled himſelf to take upon him human nature---when his own, that he came unto, inſtead of receiving him as the annointed of the Father, rejected him, derided him, and were about to put him to an ignominious death, even then, had he called upon his father, twelve legions of thoſe bright and immortal beings who tread the etherial courts, would, in a moment, have appeared to his relief, and filled with terror and devaſtation that guilty land. There was not a moment of his miniſtration but what he could have advanced himſelf to what dignity he pleaſed, having all heaven and earth ready at his command, to do all his will. It is this exalts the character---it is this that exhibits, in lively and proper colours, the great things he did for us. He did much for us---he bare much from the contradiction of ſinners for us; but he bare it voluntarily: he made himſelf of no reputation; he took upon himſelf

himself the form of a servant. Where is the character recorded in history, but the character of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, for the good of mankind voluntarily through life, stooped from a throne of dominion, and became poor and contemptible, possessed of no dignity, no outward marks of his former grandeur, and subject to that scorn, derision, and ill usage, which superior wisdom, united with poverty, meets with from hypocrisy, folly, and self-love, when reproved by it; but added to all this, he drank the bitter cup of divine wrath, and died agonising upon the cross! My God! who but thy son would have done all this? Who but he possessed love sufficient to become thus humbled for our sakes? His love alone was indeed superior to all mortal loves; and by his wonderful exercise of it, he hath smoothed our path to glory and immortality. Who amongst the sons of men would not think it hard to be charged with those crimes, which thou, my Lord, wast charged with? But if perfectly innocent of every charge that enraged malice could bring against them, how cruel would they think it! If silently they bore the reproach, mankind at large would be convinced of its truth: but should they attempt to defend their character, and retort back the falsehoods upon their foul accusers, the indignant scorn of insulted innocence would be construed into rage and self-love attempting to vindicate itself against the irresistible evidence of truth. This seems hard; but silently did our innocent blessed Lord bear all that malice, rage, envy, prejudice, superstition, and ignorance could invent to blast his character and prevent his usefulness. And thus doth it become his followers to act; they should follow on in the same path that he walked in, and tread in the same steps. In all things they ought to rise above the foul speeches of a prejudiced multitude, committing their cause into his hand who judgeth rightly. I have taken a pretty extensive survey of the *sayings* of mankind; of the desire to criminate on the one part, and the desire to *justify oneself* on the other part, and I am on the whole convinced from experience and observation, that the wisest way for a Christian to act, is to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man, chearfully practising all the relative, social, and religious duties, according to the commands of God, and then leaving every contingent event depending thereon in his hands, silently bidding defiance to all the contumely, and insulting outrage of the children of Belial. Short as is the walk from this pulpit to the chapel-door, I would not step it to clear my character from the vilest slanders that malice could invent. Should Jesus approve of our character

when

when he cometh, he will clear it from every aſperſion when he clears his own; he will then make it ſhine glorioufly: our falſe accuſers ſhall behold and tremble and be confounded: this will be time enough for our character to ſhine glorioufly, in innocence, before the eyes of our fellow-creatures. It is true, this is advice contrary to the wiſdom of this world; but worldly wiſdom is fooliſhneſs with God; and they who begin the diſagreeable work of proving and ſending, will ſoon find, that in this life they need have nothing elſe to do. But when the trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ſhall awake, how awful will be the account they will have to render of their ill-ſpent time, their wrong tempers, their want of faith in the divine judgments, and that ſelf-righteous mark of fallen-nature, an evil proneneſs to ſelf-juſtification!

But after all, the moſt humiliating of all the ſcenes that our Lord went through was that of his death. Truly it is an awful thought to conſider the creator and lord of creation led as a criminal to the bar of the creature——of the creature his own hands had formed! to ſee him there buffeted, ſpit upon, mocked, ſcourged, crucified! Was there ever humiliation like this? No man could have taken his life from him: he alone had power to lay it down, and power to take it up: therefore it was that his Father loved him, becauſe he laid down his life for the ſheep. Here was love! here was a voluntary abaſement! an extreme of humiliating degradation to accompliſh the purpoſes of that love. Love immenſe!---love infinite! or if bounded, bounded only by that creation which ſtood in need of the fulleſt diſplay of it. Love aſcending beyond himſelf to the immortal Source from whence it was derived, and deſcending to the minuteſt workmanſhip infinite wiſdom had produced; expanding all around, and going forth in acts of benevolence to every creature whoſe miſery called aloud for mercy.

In this low degrading ſtate of humiliation, his judgment was taken away; juſtice was not done him; every principle of equity, as far as man was concerned, was perverted, that he might unjuſtly ſuffer an ignominious painful death. Nay, there was ſcarce the appearance of what the Jewiſh nation called law or juſtice exerciſed towards him. They could not accuſe him of committing any crime againſt the Jewiſh ſtate; no, nor even againſt Cæſar; nor againſt the laws of Moſes. Not one criminal charge could they bring againſt him, either civil, eccleſiaſtical, or moral. One charge, indeed, they proved againſt him---he taught the people the knowledge of God, and the way of ſalvation. Debaſed indeed, muſt that govern-

ment

ment be that could act upon such a charge---abject the slavish minds of that nation whose rulers dared thus to pervert truth and justice.

> " Should it e'er come when law submits to pow'r,
> With firm resolve my steady bosom steel,
> Bravely to suffer, though I deeply feel;
> Let me, as hitherto, still draw my breath,
> In love with life, tho' not in fear of death:
> And if oppression bring me to the grave,
> And mark me dead, she ne'er shall mark a slave.
> Let sober triumphs wait upon my bier,
> I won't forgive the friend who sheds one tear.
> Whether he's ravish'd in life's early morn,
> Or in old age drops like an ear of corn,
> Full ripe he falls on nature's noblest plan,
> Who lives to reason and who dies a man."

When they accused him of teaching the people from Galilee to Jerusalem, they might have added, He not only instructs their minds, but heals their bodies---not only opens their understandings to discern the truth, and by his instruction chases away the shades and darkness from their minds, but he likewise opens the eyes of the blind, and causes the dumb man to sing the praises of God, whilst he maketh the lame man to leap like an hart, with holy rapture at the wonderful manifestation made unto him of the divine goodness; and at the same time cheers the drooping spirits of the distressed with animating consolations. But they wanted not to search the truth; their deeds would not bear to be brought to the light for examination. Herod and Pontius Pilate, wicked men, yet men unshackled by prejudice, men who had no craft to lose, who feared not the being turned out of the synagogue---these men could examine the accusations brought against him---they could pronounce him guiltless---they, sitting on the throne of judgment, could aver, " we find no fault in him;" nay, although the high-priest hypocritically rent his cloaths, and shouted " Blasphemy!" yet, even before him, Jesus stood acquitted---his false witnesses, suborned to swear away his life, agreed not in their testimony. And the innocent Jesus, standing at the bar, was forced to be appealed to, that, by a perversion of his answer, they might have some colour of evidence, though utterly distorted, that they might pronounce him to be guilty and worthy of death. Pilate the heathen, the unjust, rapacious Pilate, wicked as he was, pronounced the accusation that was brought against him, (even if it could be proved) unworthy of so severe a punishment as death: he could see through the hypocritical veil painted over with the love of truth, and zeal for the

the character of God. Pilate could see through the veil, and behold that it was not through holy jealousy that they brought him to his bar, but that it was through envy. The contrast betwixt him and the Pharisees struck the common people greatly: they heard him gladly; they hung upon his lips: the gentleness of his manners, opposed to theirs, his holy, harmless, and undefiled life, while yet he mingled in the company of sinners, and led them to the paths of virtue, shewed the Pharisees in their proper colours, as proud, adulterous, and overbearing, shunning the company of all but their own sect, condemning the people by their precepts, making religion an intolerable burthen, and, by their lives, deterring from the practice of it.

Yes, it was through envy that they delivered the Lord of life and glory into the hands of Pontius Pilate; they envied him that purity of life and disinterestedness of love, which passed a silent but severe censure upon their iniquitous actions and the selfishness of all their most benevolent deeds. they talked of purity, sanctity, and truth; they held up themselves to mankind as the servants of the Most High God---the peculiar worshippers of Jehovah; whilst beneath the hypocritical garb of outward appearance, a long face, a long prayer, and the sound of a trumpet before them to proclaim their almsgiving: beneath these outward masks they had a spirit of self-love, of pride of heart, a love to filthy lucre, devouring the houses of the widow, and eating up the support of the fatherless, and desolated orphan; hearts full of adultery, impurity, and all uncleanness: they could not bear the short prayers, the open countenance, the humble manner, the generous spirit, the disinterested life of our Lord: his life condemned their actions, his words passed severe censures on their iniquitous conduct; therefore, like Joseph's brethren of old, they were enraged against their brother because he told them the truth, and, their deeds being evil, they could not bear it; because of their iniquity and hypocrisy they could not endure his life, which was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sin. In the midst of poverty his life shone with an holy lustre; whilst they, giving themselves up to all iniquity, seeing the wonderful miracles he performed, the purity of his doctrines disturbed them much, his piety more, but his miracles most of all. It was these that caused them to exclaim, Let us crucify him, lest the Romans come and take away our place and nation. They beheld these with fear, and trembling, and rage, and exhorted each other to put him to death; and, that they might blast his character, and shew

ſhew before the nation their zeal for the honour of Jehovah, they accuſed him of blaſphemy, but in vain, even with the aſſiſtance of ſuborned evidence they could not prove it; the charge, as every unproved charge does, returned back upon their own guilty heads. In vain did they afterwards accuſe him to Pilate; the heathen magiſtrate, inſtead of being active to puniſh, feared. He thought him a good and a virtuous man, at leaſt. Perhaps from the meſſage of his wife, and the manner of our Lord at his bar, he might even have higher though confuſed ideas of the character of Jeſus. Who art thou? ſaid Pilate: the judge laid aſide the dignity of ſituation, and began to converſe with the criminal at his bar. He was convinced that juſtice was not done him; that envy accuſed and malice would deſtroy him. But though the outward garb of legal juſtice was put on, the character of our bleſſed Lord was cleared from every immorality that malice and injuſtice could bring againſt it. Pilate at laſt thought that he had hit upon an expedient which would ſave his life, but which, by its not ſucceeding, became the means of putting him to death. "Whom will ye (ſaid Pilate) that I releaſe unto you, Barabbas, or Jeſus who is called Chriſt?" Surely, thought Pilate, if I contraſt this infamous murderer and robber with the meek, holy, innocent Jeſus, they will behold the immenſity of difference between them, and releaſe the innocent, but condemn the guilty. But alas! to the diſgrace of the profeſſional world, an heathen could feel the common ſenſations of equity and propriety within his boſom, which a worſhipper of the true God could ſtifle. Truly they ſhall come from the eaſt and the weſt, the north, and the ſouth, who have felt the impulſe of divine truth within their breaſt, and have acted upon it, and ſhall be received into the kingdom, whilſt the children of the kingdom, who have had the whole of revealed truth in their poſſeſſion, but have perverted it, or acted contrary to it, ſhall be caſt out. Under the outward form of religion, it has remained for them alone to blaſt the character of Deity, to pervert his word, to perſecute to death thoſe who called upon his name, and, under pretence of doing the pure and holy God a ſervice, to be guilty of murder and every iniquity. Profeſſors may call themſelves the diſciples of Jeſus, the true worſhippers of the living God, the children of the Moſt High; but he that hath not the ſpirit of God is none of his.

"Whom will ye (ſaid Pilate) that I releaſe unto you, Barabbas, or Jeſus who is called Chriſt?" In vain did Pilate reaſon with himſelf, If I propoſe this atrocious offender, this

breaker through every ſocial law, this abominable character, this murderer, in oppoſition to this holy man, they will certainly reject Barabbas with diſdain, and chooſe this good man as an object of their clemency. Surely malice and envy will be gratified with making him appear in ſociety as a pardoned malefactor, without carrying on their wickedneſs to the ſhedding of innocent blood.

But alas! how miſtakenly did Pilate reaſon: they ſaid, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Thus was our bleſſed Lord purſued through their iniquitous courts of injuſtice. Examine with calmneſs every ſtep that was taken, and you will find that through all his judgment, or that upright ſentence that ſhould have been paſſed upon his actions, was, in this awful hour of his humiliation, taken away, and even the decent forms of juſtice were not attended to; when he ſpake they ſpit in his face, buffeted him, ridiculed him, ſmote him. Was this juſtice? Does juſtice puniſh uncondemned? Was it any other perſon than our Lord Jeſus Chriſt that was ſo treated, one might ſay, the court that permitted ſuch proceedings to take place was more degraded than the poor innocent ſufferer who was called to endure them: but as the character of Jeſus, his rank in creation as judge of quick and dead, infinitely tranſcended the honours they bare, ſo his humiliation, in being the ſufferer in ſuch a degrading of juſtice, was infinitely greater than theirs, under any circumſtances, could have been.

He was condemned contrary to their own laws, and contrary to the legal forms of every civilized nation. The Jews had a cuſtom that no man ſhould be taken up on a ſuſpicion of guilt on any of their ſolemn feaſt days, or on the days preceding them, on purpoſe to prevent the hilarity of the day being beclouded with ſuch unpleaſant ſights. But ſo great was their zeal to condemn the holy Jeſus, that, contrary to this cuſtom, they ſat up the whole of the night preceding the paſſover, that they might take him; and having apprehended, tried him and cauſed him to be crucified, and this on their moſt ſolemn feſtival, breaking through every fence that wiſdom or ſuperſtition had erected, putting him to death on the very day, the hour, and even the moment of that day when the law which they profeſſed to venerate had ordered the paſcal lamb to be ſlain. And in the accompliſhment of their cruel purpoſes, they brake through thoſe traditions which they held as ſacred. It is true they would not defile themſelves by entering into the judgment hall; but their conſcience was not ſo tender but that they could bribe men to forſwear themſelves, and ſolemnly and deliberately

liberately take upon themſelves blood-guiltineſs. Conſcience was delicately tender about the defilements of the fleſh, but perfectly aſleep, with all the calmneſs of undiſturbed repoſe, concerning the defilements of the ſpirit. They could not pollute themſelves by entering a court of judicature on a feſtival day, but they could pollute that court by rendering it inſtrumental to the murdering of the holy one of Iſrael. Themſelves they would not defile, but cared not how much they defiled him. It was truly of a piece with all carnal, human will-worſhip; paying tythes of aniſe and cummin, attending to the trifling minutiæ of unappointed ceremonies, but neglecting the weightier matters of the law, juſtice, mercy, and truth. By their own laws it is ſaid, that when a criminal was taken up, he was not, at the ſooneſt, to be tried before the next day, and if condemned, not to be executed before the day after. And ſuch regulations had wiſdom in them: it gave an opportunity for the accuſed to conſider of his ſituation, to collect his friends together, that they might appear to his character. It gave him time to conſider the charges that were to be exhibited againſt him: and it gave ſome little time for his accuſers to reflect, for their paſſions to cool, and for their judgment to be fully ſatisfied concerning the accuſed perſon's guilt, and of their own breach of the law, ſhould they bear a falſe teſtimony. It likewiſe gave the judge time to reflect over the ſentence that had been paſſed---of the aggregate of little favourable circumſtances that had appeared in evidence, and of the propriety of enforcing the ſentence, or pardoning the criminal. All theſe wiſe regulations, in the caſe of our bleſſed Lord, were neglected; he was taken up, tried, caſt, condemned, crucified, and dead, in the ſhort ſpace of about fifteen hours; ſo that *his manner of life, who*, amongſt his friends, *could declare?* Terror ſtruck by the hand of power, they in the moment of fear had all forſook him and fled; and no time was allowed him to recall them as evidence to facts concerning his private life and public miniſtration. Our Lord ſeems to allude to this circumſtance, John, xviii. 20, 21. "Jeſus anſwered him, I ſpake openly to the world, I ever taught in the ſynagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always reſort, and in ſecret have I ſaid nothing. Why aſkeſt thou me? Aſk them which heard me what I have ſaid unto them: behold they know what I ſaid."

Another form of the Jewiſh court was, that no proceſs could begin in it at night. It muſt be began in the face of day that the accuſed might be aware of it, and prepared to guard againſt its conſequences; but this juſt regulation was not attended

tended to; the proceſs againſt our Lord was began at night, he was precluded from taking any ſteps to exculpate himſelf by the illegal haſte with which they hurried on his trial, even to the condemning him to death, as far as they had power, before the morning dawn aroſe.

By another law, to prevent a confounding of crimes, it was enacted, that no two criminals could be put to death together, unleſs their crimes were alike; but, contrary to this law, our bleſſed Lord was crucified between two thieves; numbered with the tranſgreſſors. If guilty of the crime he was charged with, it had been blaſphemy, but he was executed not as for blaſphemy, but as for theft; *his judgment was taken away*; not even the forms of equity were preſerved; his trial, condemnation, and execution, were alike unjuſt, contrary to every principle of law, and in direct oppoſition to the accuſtomed practices of his nation. Pilate knew that they condemned him unjuſtly; perhaps there may be ſome one here preſent who may aſk, Why then did Pilate paſs ſo unjuſt a ſentence, ſeeing that he had it abſolutely in his power to have reſcued him from their malice. Was not the ſentence that he paſſed an acknowledgement of his guilt? The Romans aimed at univerſal dominion under all their various forms of governments; to attain it they ruled the nations with mildneſs, and according to their own laws; puniſhing with the utmoſt ſeverity the oppreſſions of thoſe whom they appointed as governors, and liſtening to every charge that was brought againſt them. Power, whether an individual or a nation poſſeſſes it, is the ſeat of jealouſy; the leaſt ſuppoſition of an encroachment ſtirreth up this dreadful paſſion: it was on this ground that the attempts of Pilate to releaſe Jeſus were rendered abortive. The Jews cried out, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæſar's friend; who ever maketh himſelf a king, ſpeaketh againſt Cæſar." Here it was that every virtuous reſolution of Pilate was ſtaggered: the firmneſs of his mind in the defence of innocence was gone. Pilate had, whilſt governor, been guilty of various acts of oppreſſion, contrary to the ſpirit of the Roman laws; he ſaw, therefore, and he felt the force of the charge, and ſank beneath its weight; he knew the ſuſpicious nature of Tiberius, and he felt guilt in his own boſom; this made him to condemn the innocent; him of whom his underſtanding was convinced that he was an holy virtuous man, brought to his tribunal by the malice of his enemies. If Pilate had always done as he ought to have done he would boldly have put them at defiance. But the Roman governor could not ſay "Witneſs againſt me before the Lord and before his anointed: whoſe ox have I taken? or whoſe

whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hands have I received a bribe to blind mine eyes therewith." It is sin that makes a man to be a coward, whilst innocence exalteth his courage, and maketh him bold as a lion. Pilate, had he done at all times his duty, would have felt the whole strength of his situation; he would have known that every good man in Judea would have approved of his conduct in resisting the malice of bad men against an injured innocent character; he would have been convinced that his conduct not only merited, but would have obtained, the approbation of the emperor. But, alas! unhappy Pilate! he knew that these bad men could have proved him so far guilty of the charges that they could bring against him, as to make it strong presumptive evidence that the remainder of it was well founded. Awful, indeed, is the career of sin; happy the man who dreads to take the first step in it; innumerable and many are its paths---he that entereth, wandereth, not knowing where to stop. The man who giveth himself up to his passions, of ambition, avarice, lust, revenge, &c. &c. may it not be said unto him, "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" Can such an one reprove, rebuke, or exhort? Will not self-condemnation prevent his duty? or hypocrisy, or want of self-knowledge, render his heart callous? And thus it was with Pilate; his own crimes made him to condemn the innocent.

And who shall declare his generation? His relations were far distant from him---his disciples had forsook him; they fled, fearing the same vengeance hung over them as had seized their innocent master----he had no friend at hand to plead his righteous cause---the sudden arrest of Jesus appears to have stricken his followers with terror. It is evident, from the historical narrations of the evangelists, that he was held in high estimation by a great mass of the people; they followed him from place to place; they hung, with silent attention, on his lips---they had been partakers of his benevolence, and their bodies had been restored to health by his miraculous power. The scribes and Pharisees, the mighty wicked, feared to touch him, because of the veneration that the people had for him. It would, on this account alone have been almost impossible for them to have carried their unjust cruel purposes into effect, had they but given time for his scattered friends to have rallied round him, and have boldly *declared his generation*, his manner of life, in these humiliating days of this his mortal generation. But his life was taken from the earth; truly it was the hour of the power of darkness.

"Success

" Succeſs attended their infernal wiles:
Bruis'd in the heel, the woman's ſacred ſeed
Felt Satan's force, and fell, yea, proſtrate fell
Beneath the malice of his vengeful foe."

His life was taken from the earth. O how keen, at that dread moment, were the feelings of his faithful followers! Verily they thought it had been him who ſhould have redeemed Iſrael! Alas! how different! him whom they had looked to have ſeen upon his throne, judging righteouſly, ſtands like a malefactor at the tribunal of injuſtice. The Meſſiah, the king of glory, is crowned with thorns, and the reflecting rays from the poliſhed gems of his diadem are changed to ſtreams of blood, guſhing from his thorn-pierced temples. Behold the king of Iſrael, not upon the throne of his glory, with the kings of Sheba and Seba bringing preſents unto him, and deputies from every part of the habitable globe proſtrating themſelves before him---but behold him ſtretched out upon the accurſed tree---crucified like a thief---numbered with the tranſgreſſors, whilſt the inſulting ſons of violence and ſuperſtition cry aloud, " He ſaid that he ſhould ſave others---let him ſave himſelf. If thou be the Meſſiah, come down from the croſs, and we will believe on thee."

His life was taken away; and as he, by his doctrines and examples, taught us to live---ſo, by this his unjuſt death, he has taught us to die. My God! may I live like him, and, if called to the awful horrors of his death, may I learn like him, to gloriſy thee by my death!

Truly the wiſdom of God is ſuperior to the wiſdom of man. Who could have thought the way of the croſs was the path to glory? But becauſe he hath thus ſuffered, therefore hath his Father highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhall bow, in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord to the glory of God the Father. " For the tranſgreſſions of my people was he ſmitten," ſaith the prophet. Wonderful in wiſdom and goodneſs is Jehovah our God! He taketh not pleaſure in the death or groans of his creatures; fury is not in him, that it needeth to be appeaſed by the immolation of his only begotten ſon; but he findeth out a way by which he may be a juſt God, and yet a juſtifier of the ungodly. By ſuffering he perfecteth his ſon to be the head of creation: by his death he reheads and reunites the whole of his creatures by love; he gave himſelf for us, that we might tread in his ſteps. The ſpirit of love flow-

eth

eth from him, the head, to his church, and through them to the whole creation, bringing every creature again into the image of God, whose nature, whose essence is love.

Here then we behold such good as fully justifies the Deity in causing an innocent person to be put to death for the benefit of the guilty. Besides, death was not forced upon the Lord by constraint; but good and evil were placed before him; and, supported by the hope of the good that was before him, he endured the evil of suffering for the sake of the glory that should follow---the glory of subduing, reheading, reuniting all by love, that, all evil being destroyed, all error corrected, every rebellion subdued beneath his feet, he might resign the crown unto his Father, that God might be all in all. The taking away the life of the Messiah by the death of the cross, was, to the Jews, a stumbling block, and to the Greeks it was foolishness: they could not see any end to be answered by it. The one expected an all-conquering Messiah by the power of the sword, a victorious subduer of the nations---the others thought that an almighty Being could pardon his creatures, and restore them to virtue and happiness, without putting his son to death to accomplish it. To the one party, therefore, the suffering state of the Messiah, contrasted with his future glory, was such a stumbling block, that they could not, nor have they to this day stepped over it. But to the wise and learned Greeks, ignorant of the prophetic writings, it was foolishness. They thought it proclaimed a weak, ignorant, though kind being, desirous to do good, but not knowing how to do it in the best manner. He did evil in killing the innocent for the guilty, that good might come. Neither party entered into the spirit of Christianity---the all-subduing power of love, the Father giving the beloved of his soul to manifest that, having given him for our salvation, he was willing, with him, freely to give us all things. The son, the Lord and maker of the universe, negligent of his own glory, through the greatness of his love, left the throne of dominion, took the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: and this account of the conduct of Christ is introduced by the apostle with the account of the motives or main spring of action in him which led to such conduct. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Here, then, is the moving cause, the main spring, of social happiness, so distant from the conquering hero's over-bearing spirit---so contrary

contrary to the complex vain philoſophy of the wiſdom of this world---a ſpirit of hoping and enduring all things---a ſpirit of ſeeking our own good, not by conſtraining others to obey us, or honour us, or pay us tribute---but by doing good to all---by being like the Deity, who ſeeketh not any thing from his creatures, but openeth wide his liberal hand, and all things living are filled with plenteouſneſs.

There was, therefore, a neceſſity for the death of Chriſt; and how light ſo ever Chriſtians may conſider this ſubject, the apoſtles of our Lord repreſent it as the foundation of all our hopes of ſalvation; they point him out as the only medium of acceſs unto the Father; and declare that his name is the only name given whereby we can be ſaved. Thro' him alone have we acceptance with God. Let, therefore, the Jew ſtumble over the threſhold of divine truth---let the wiſe men of this world turn it into ridicule---Chriſt crucified is our boaſt and our glory; we will glory in the croſs of Chriſt, and like him go without the camp bearing our reproach; Chriſt died for our ſins; the puniſhment of our iniquities was exacted from him, and by his ſtripes are we healed. "By his knowledge ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtify the multitude, for the puniſhment of their iniquities he ſhall bear; therefore will Jehovah diſtribute unto him the multitude for his portion, and the mighty people ſhall he ſhare for his ſpoil; becauſe he poured out his ſoul unto death, and was numbered with the tranſgreſſors, and he bare the ſin of the multitude, and made interceſſion for the tranſgreſſors.----Who his own ſelf bare our ſins in his own body upon the tree, that we, being dead to ſin, ſhould live unto righteouſneſs: by whoſe ſtripes ye were healed."

Viewing, therefore, the death of our dear Lord and maſter in this manner, it is truly of conſequence unto us that his life was taken from the earth; and not unto us only who have returned unto the ſhepherd and biſhop of our ſouls is his death of conſequence, but unto all the creation of God, for he taſted death for all; he gave himſelf a ranſom for all, a teſtimony for its proper ſeaſon.

The grand end of the death of Chriſt was, that in Chriſt God might reconcile the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them: it is the not ſeeing this important truth that cauſes the various denominations of Chriſtians to have ſuch contracted views of the Divine goodneſs. The whole of their exhortations to each other is built upon the ground of the Divine enmity to ſinful creatures; they ſee not the love of God to his creature, but his hatred to the iniquity of

of his creature; they behold and expatiate upon the depravity of the creature, and upon his fearful apprehenſion of the divine vengeance; but they behold not the cauſe of this; the creature, knowing his guilt, but not knowing the divine love, hates as well as dreads that being whom he conſiders as having all power, and exerciſing that power to torment and not to correct; he therefore ſhudders at the terrors of the Lord. The language of Scripture tends to inform the mind of the creature, and give him right apprehenſions of Deity. It doth not ſay, Appeaſe the wrath of the majeſty of heaven, if ſo be he may be gracious, and may change the hatred of his nature to love. No! the language of revelation is this---GOD is LOVE! God ſo loved the world that he gave his only begotten ſon, that whoſoever believeth on him might have everlaſting life.---In Chriſt's ſtead we pray you, be ye reconciled to God. Sinner, believe on him; God hath for Chriſt's ſake forgiven thee; there is not any condemnation for the ſins that are paſt. Why ſhouldeſt thou ſhew thy hatred to thy Maker by rebelling againſt his government? O turn unto the Lord, that he may manifeſt that he hath had mercy upon thee---that he may teſtify that he hath abundantly pardoned thee.

The death of Chriſt, by taking away the enmity of the human heart to the divine diſpenſations, taketh away the obſtructions that are in the way of man's ſalvation, and diſpoſes him to return to the Father of mercies: and I know of nothing that tends to humble and ſubdue the haughty ſpirit of man, like the ſufferings and death of Chriſt. Oh! they pierce the ſoul! they ſhew him what true greatneſs is. The excellency of the love of Chriſt humbles, ſubdues, and levels in the duſt, the ambition, the towering ſelf-approbation of man. It opens the eyes of his mind; and, beneath the tinſel dreſs of ſelf-righteouſneſs, and the carnal approbation of the world, it lays open unto him his heart, it forces ſelf-communion upon him, and the man judges his actions---not by their appearance before the eyes of man---but as they appear before the heart-ſearching God; and whilſt thus confounded at himſelf, the love of God, manifeſted in the gift of his ſon, burſts forth upon his aſtoniſhed mind, with all the radiance of divine glory. Then, indeed, doth the Lord Jeſus appear the chiefeſt among ten thouſand, the faireſt of the ſons of men, the altogether lovely: he is, indeed, precious to that ſoul who hath, by faith, waſhed himſelf white in the blood of the lamb. Aſtoniſhed at his paſt rebellions, he now crieth out, I can no longer ſin againſt ſo much mercy and goodneſs! Shall I ſin that grace may abound? God

 forbid!

forbid! Thus the croſs of Chriſt is indeed the mighty power of God unto ſalvation in him that believeth.

It is evident that the ſufferings of Chriſt are a very important part of divine truth; ſo important, that all the prophets ſpake of them, and all the evangeliſts have recorded the fulfilment of their prophecies. When we conſider this, whenever we hear or read of the ſufferings of Chriſt with attention, it ſhould lead us to ſelf-condemnation, to a holy gratefulneſs of heart, and to an abhorrence of ſin; we ſhould be led into a contemplation of the Divine goodneſs, and a holy determination to act, conſidering ourſelves not as our own, but as his who has purchaſed us with his own blood; and we ſhould here alſo ſoar beyond the narrow regions of ſelf, and ſee him not only the propitiation for our ſins, but for the ſins of the whole world, the great reheader and reconciler of all unto God.

Did Chriſt, who knew no ſin, ſuffer for us? Then let us arm ourſelves with the ſame mind; let the ſame diſpoſition be in us as was alſo in him: he ſuffered willingly for us, let us ſuffer willingly for him: let the time paſt of our lives ſuffice. Jeſus, the ſon of the Moſt High, left the boſom of the Father, and ſacrificed all the pleaſures that his heart panted after, for our ſakes: Oh, let us ſacrifice our boſom ſins for his ſake who gave up his own life upon the tree for us.

Was Chriſt meek, gentle, and kind in his manner? when reviled not reviling again, but permitting himſelf to be led like a lamb to the ſlaughter; and as a ſheep before his ſhearers is dumb, in like manner was our lamb-like Lord, not opening his mouth. Do you tread in his ſteps, not rendering railing for railing, but contrarywiſe, bleſſing. In patience poſſeſs ye your ſouls. Be ye filled with meekneſs and humbleneſs of mind to God and man. It is but little that you can ſuffer here below—add not to its keenneſs by your reſtleſſneſs, nor to its length by your reſiſtance; but bear it in the ſpirit of Chriſt, and then ſhall ye have joy with him when he appeareth.

A lively faith in Jeſus our Lord and Saviour is a matter of great importance. My ſaviour that was ſmitten for me, ſmitten with the tongue of men, with the keen ſword of poverty, and with the heavy ſtroke of a cruel and accurſed death, Oh, may I have a lively faith in thee---in thy appearing in the clouds of heaven in all the ſplendour of divine glory, attended by the immortal hoſt, with the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect: believing on the divine promiſes I caſt myſelf and all my concerns

cerns upon thy care, knowing that thou art able to keep to the uttermoſt all that which I have committed unto thee.

My beloved friends, never deſpair of the mercy of God, but conſider what Chriſt has done and ſuffered for you; draw near unto him in the full aſſurance of faith, knowing that though your ſins be as ſcarlet, you ſhall become whiter than ſnow; the mountains of guilt ſhall be levelled; and, freed from the burden of a condemned conſcience, you ſhall go on your way rejoicing to his kingdom. May he give you all of his grace, that ye may prepare for the coming kingdom of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

END OF THE NINTH SERMON.

SERMON X.

BY THE LATE

ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

[NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.]

ACTS, XXVI. 27.

King Agrippa, believeſt thou the prophets? I know that thou believeſt.

HOW very beautiful is this apology for his conduct, made by Paul of Tarſus, before King Agrippa! Plain and ſimple is the voice of truth, and carries with it ſtriking evidence of its veracity. Paul had received a learned education, and attained knowledge ſurpaſſing thoſe who had been through the ſame academic ſtudies; his writings prove him to have been a very acute logician, very capable of making a moſt eloquent defence; and, whilſt he only appeared to convince the underſtanding by the force of language, at the ſame time to arreſt the paſſions, and force them to become willing agents in his cauſe; but inſtead of employing a train of evidence to ſet off his cauſe by the powers of oratory, as human wiſdom would have done, Paul ſimply related facts; he declared his manner of life: he appealed to thoſe who knew him for the truth of the facts he alledged, particularly his having been a perſecutor of thoſe who believed in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. He ſays "I verily thought within myſelf, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jeſus of Nazareth; which things I alſo did in Jeruſalem; and many of the ſaints did I ſhut up in priſon, having received authority from the chief prieſts; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice againſt them; and I puniſhed them oft in every ſynagogue, and compelled them to blaſpheme; and being exceedingly mad againſt them, I perſecuted them even unto ſtrange cities." It was not likely that ſo zealous

zealous a bigot, one whose mind was so firmly set against Christianity, would have embraced it, and suffered so much for it, unless evidence very strong, and most exceedingly convincing, was brought home to his understanding—evidence sufficiently strong to alter the mind of a man full of zeal against the doctrine, almost bordering upon phrenzy—a man puffed up with knowledge, led on by interest, and supported in his fullest career by the applause of his country, and by the utmost support of the great men thereof---Would he, without the fullest conviction of his mind, have endeavoured to support that faith which he had been so very eager to destroy? Therefore, I conceive that the sudden conviction of Paul, next to the resurrection of our blessed Lord, is one of the strongest evidences of the truth of Christianity. The simplicity of the narration carries with it a body of evidence in favour of the truth of the fact: "Whereupon as I went to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief priests, at mid-day, O king! I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying, in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest."

Paul was not afraid of being found in a falsehood; he relates not a story of a thing done in a chamber, but in the face of day; not in secret, but in the midst of company: he dreaded not being confronted with those whom he said were witnesses of the fact, although he knew them to be under the power of his accusers. Conscious innocence, the knowledge that he spake the truth, gave him boldness before his adversaries; if not true, how easy for his accusers to have exposed him for a liar, a hypocrite, and a knave---if he had not been sent to Damascus to persecute---if those sent with him had not been overpowered with the splendor of the light, and fallen to the ground, how easy was it for them to have proved its falsehood, and legally punished him for the deception! Their elevating the arm of persecution to crush him, instead of legally attempting to establish his guilt, proves their own wickedness, the innocence of Paul, and the truth of Christianity. Paul by their conduct stands acquitted, and his accusers stand condemned before the man they had accused as criminal.

"And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said, with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee

thee mad. But he ſaid, I am not mad, moſt noble Feſtus; but ſpeak forth the words of truth and ſoberneſs; for the king knoweth of theſe things, before whom alſo I ſpeak freely: for I am perſuaded that none of theſe things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believeſt thou the prophets? I know that thou believeſt. Then Agrippa ſaid unto Paul, Almoſt thou perſuadeſt me to be a Chriſtian. And Paul ſaid, I would to God, that not only thou, but alſo all that hear me this day, were both almoſt, and altogether, ſuch as I am, except theſe bonds."

King Agrippa was a wiſe and underſtanding magiſtrate, well acquainted with all the cuſtoms of the Jewiſh nation, poſſeſſing a noble, generous mind; happy would it have been for him if he had, indeed, become altogether like Paul in the reception of the truth of God; happy would it indeed have been for him, had he made his earthly ſcepter ſubmit to the ſceptre of the Lord's anointed. Agrippa lived to ſee the deſtruction of the Jewiſh nation, and the total overthrow of all its national polity; what a comfort would Chriſtainity have been to him under the ſcattering abroad of that people over whom he reigned. Chriſtianity is a manifeſtation of the Divine goodneſs; the reception of it is an acknowledgment of the ſupremacy of the only true God, and a confeſſion of a holy determination, by a conſtant obedience to his laws, to own his authority; therefore, to be perſuaded to be a Chriſtian, would be no diſgrace to the greateſt monarch that ever ſwayed a ſceptre. All the kings of the earth ſhall come to honour Jehovah, and, by a payment of tribute to his Meſſiah, own their ſubjection. In the preſence of the God of the whole earth the Chriſtian is a greater character, and bears a higher title than that of any monarch on the globe; for he governs himſelf, he is a ſpiritual repreſentative of the Deity: and the glory of a Chriſtian as much outſhines that of an earthly monarch, as the ſplendor of virtue outſhines all the pomp and parade of earthly grandeur: all the pleaſures of life are not to be compared with the enjoyment that ariſes from peace of mind, and a conſciouſneſs that all our ways are well pleaſing to God.

Perhaps ſome infidel may be here, who, in the midſt of a land profeſſing ſubjection to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, has lived the greateſt part of his days without the knowledge of God, and his Chriſt, and yet has been the whole time in ſearch after happineſs. Oh that I could bring the doctrines of the croſs home to your mind. You now, at times, doubt the being of a God, and yet rejoice to hear that there is a great Firſt Cauſe, becauſe

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it takes away the anxiety from your ſoul---that cold deadening ſenſation that attends the thought of never ending death. Let me aſſure you, O miſerable man, Chriſtianity is a truth, its principles are ſolid, its baſis ſure; it is not a ſtring of aſſertions, but it reſts upon demonſtrative principles; it calleth not upon your credulity, but it demands your examination, and reſts its evidence with the cloſeſt inveſtigation of your rational faculties, and aſks for your faith, only as it proves its truth to your enlightened judgment. The man who reads the records of hiſtory, and believes, in conſequence, that Julius Cæſar landed in this kingdom, but reading the Scriptures will not believe the things recorded concerning our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, he is a credulous man, he rejects a collected blaze of evidence of things that can be demonſtrated to be facts, whilſt he credulouſly places his faith on a few aſſertions, which may be truth, but which has but a cobweb evidence to ſupport them; for this reſts chiefly in the aſſertion of Cæſar, and inferential reaſoning; but the doctrines, the life, the death, the burial, the reſurrection, the aſcenſion of our Lord, reſt upon the declarations of eye witneſſes, friends and enemies, upon the records of nations, upon monumental teſtimony, upon traditional evidence, upon fulfilment of prophecy, upon miraculous performances. There is evidence that the reaſoner may examine, and of which no cloſe examiner can poſſibly be a ſceptic. All that is recorded of our Lord, from his birth to his aſcenſion, are not deeds of darkneſs; the curtain of night was not ſpread over them, and the trumpet of fame afterwards employed to ſound them through the earth. No! multitudes were witneſſes of their truth. Though born in a manger, angelic hoſts proclaimed the mighty fact, and with heavenly ſongs uſhered in the Meſſiah's reign; ſhepherds ſaw, and liſtened to the lofty praiſe, and, obedient to the divine command, came, examined, and were convinced of its truth, and ſpread the joyful tidings around the nation. By divine teſtimony, the ſacred news was carried to diſtant nations, and the ſages of the Eaſt became, unintentionally, heralds of it to the court of Herod, proclaiming to the king of Iſrael that He, whoſe right it was to reign, had come down from heaven to liſt up his ſtandard, and to ſway his ſceptre over his people. The miracles that he performed, and the doctrines he taught, was in the face of multitudes, multitudes who could ſee, and judge for themſelves, concerning the truth of the facts; his enemies themſelves were forced to yield their unwilling teſtimony to the truth. Multitudes ſaw him die; the croſs was erected on a lofty ſpot, and being on a ſolemn feſtival, thouſands could not

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but obſerve it; upwards of five hundred witneſſed his reſurrection and aſcenſion, converſing with him upon the nature of his kingdom, and for forty days receiving his inſtruction how to carry on the work he had committed to them: and from the day that he was crucified, to the preſent hour, the breaking of bread has been a ſtanding memorial, kept up by his diſciples, of the truth of theſe things: things not done in a corner, but in the face of day; not myſterious things, which might be performed by ſlight of hand, but things of which the ſenſes of the moſt ſimple underſtanding could well judge; thoſe things which the pens of many eye witneſſes have recorded; the pens of their adverſaries have confirmed them, and ſtanding memorials of their truth have, from their firſt inſtitution, from the time the facts were performed, been invariably kept up. Falſehood carries not with it ſuch evidence; more and ſtronger evidence it is unreaſonable to demand; but if demanded it is to be obtained; evidence internal in the nature of things; evidence external in the lives of the profeſſors, the accompliſhment of prophecy, and the faithfulneſs of God. Oh then, ſearch the Scriptures, obſerve the beauty, the excellence, the juſtneſs of their morality; ſee in them manifeſted the wiſdom, goodneſs, and power of God; ſee how every thing in them is adapted to the want and underſtanding of man, and particularly when you inveſtigate the prophetic writings; your faith then will be confirmed, your mind enlightened, and your whole ſoul aſtoniſhed at the fore-knowledge of God manifeſted in them. They may be divided into two great heads:

1. Such as related to the firſt coming of Chriſt, his life, his death, his reſurrection, his aſcenſion, his glorification at the right hand of the father, his ſecond coming to judge his ſervants, and reign over the earth, his ſecond judgment of all, and his final ſubduing all unto himſelf.

2. The prophecies that relate to individuals, to cities, to ſtates, and to remarkable facts: prophecy is of great importance, it is a ſure word, a certain confirming teſtimony of the truth of revelation.

"King Agrippa, believeſt thou the prophets?" Thou haſt read them, thou haſt heard them commented on; thou haſt conſidered them as the divine declaration concerning things to come deſerves to be conſidered; they all ſpeak of Jeſus; each hath ſaid a ſomething, leſs or more, upon his ſufferings, and his following glory. King Agrippa, believeſt thou the prophets? If thou doſt believe, O King, thou muſt become a Chriſtian, for they all teſtify of Chriſt.

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O thou who art here before me, who haſt read over the records that God hath given concerning his ſon, believeſt thou the prophets? They all teſtify of Jeſus, the crucified, but now the highly exalted ſaviour. The firſt prophecy that appears concerning the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, comes under the form of a threatening, but containeth in it a fulneſs of mercy. Geneſis, iii. 15. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed: it ſhall bruiſe thy head and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel." We have an infallible comment upon this prophecy, by the inſpired John. 1 John, iii. 8. "The devil ſinneth from the beginning; for this purpoſe, the ſon of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil." Yes, Chriſt ſhall bruiſe the head of Satan; he ſhall deſtroy his power; he has even now taken the prey from the hand of the mighty; but he will go on reſcuing captives, overturning his authority, cruſhing to pieces his power, and delivering from him the children of diſobedience, in whoſe heart he now ruleth.

Again, God ſpeaking to Abraham, ſaith, Gen. xxii. 18. "In thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed." Which prophecy Paul explains, Galatians, iii. 16. "To Abraham and to his ſeed were the promiſes made. He ſaith not, and to ſeeds, as of many, but as of one; and to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt." Thus is the Old Teſtament explained and confirmed by the new. In the promiſe the ſeed of Abraham is pointed out, the bleſſer of all the nations of the earth; and in the inſpired comment upon the promiſe, the attention is taken off from the various deſcendants of Abraham, and fixed upon one, upon Chriſt, the ſon of Abraham, the ſon of God, "upon him, who loved us, and gave himſelf for us."

The ſame promiſe was made and confirmed to Iſaac and to Jacob, and made to extend beyond all the nations, even unto all the families of the earth, that the juſtification of Chriſt may be upon all, whether believers or unbelievers, even to the ends of the earth; for he was appointed the ſaviour of all, the propitiatory covering for the ſins of the whole world; and this juſtification is made ours by faith; being completely "upon all them that believe:" upon ſuch "there is no condemnation;" their paſt tranſgreſſions are forgiven, their iniquities are covered over, their tranſgreſſions are hid, the ſun of righteouſneſs hath ariſen upon them with healing in his wings.

Moſes the faithful ſervant of Jehovah, was not only a great general, a great lawgiver, a faithful hiſtorian, and an excellent poet, but he was alſo a great prophet. Amongſt others of the

prophecies that he delivered, is one recorded, Deut. xviii. 15. "The Lord thy God will raiſe up unto thee a prophet from the midſt of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye ſhall hearken. According to all that thou deſireſt of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the aſſembly, ſaying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God; neither let me ſee this great fire any more, that I die not: and the Lord ſaid unto me, They have well ſpoken that which they have ſpoken; I will raiſe them up a prophet from amongſt their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he ſhall ſpeak unto them all that I command him; and it ſhall come to paſs, that whoſoever will not hearken unto my words which he ſhall ſpeak in my name, I will require it of him."

This prophecy can apply to none but the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; in him alone does every character poſſeſſed by Moſes, of king, prieſt, and prophet, meet; and at the ſame time, in one not of the Aaronical family. David was a king, and a prophet, but he was neither a prieſt or a lawgiver. Samuel was a prophet and a judge, or adminiſtrator of the laws of Moſes, but he was not either a king, a prieſt, or lawgiver. Every king, prieſt, and prophet, ſuſtained ſome peculiar character belonging to Moſes; but in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and in him only, do all the various perfect parts of that character meet; and the whole is confirmed in him, as the authority of Moſes was confirmed amongſt the children of Iſrael, by miraculous influence; all nature heard, and obeyed the voice of the ſon of God; and teſtified, that the Father had exalted him to be a prince and a ſaviour unto his people. Mahomet ſet himſelf up for this prophet whom the God of Iſrael was to raiſe up; but he failed in proof. Moſes wrought miracles to prove his miſſion, and Chriſt wrought miracles to prove his; but the ſword and the truncheon of Mahomet was that on which he founded his claim, and which, without convincing the underſtanding, ſubdued the hearts of the people's beneath him. But our bleſſed Lord, deſpiſed by the great, unbacked by an army, by the force of evidence alone, ſeized the underſtanding, and led the willing convert into full obedience to his will. How different this from the conduct of Mahomet; he demanded the implicit faith of his conquered ſlaves; whilſt Moſes and Chriſt demonſtrated the truth of all they ſaid, and aſked of freemen that aſſent which publicity of conduct and demonſtrative facts had a right to expect; they both called for credence to thoſe things which were ſeen, felt, and lay open to their cloſeſt and cooleſt examination.

Chriſt

Chriſt was indeed a lawgiver like unto Moſes: like him he gave new laws to the children of Iſrael, the ſeed of Abraham by faith; and by his ſovereign will, unſupported by prieſtly authority, he totally annulled all the ancient religious ceremonies that Moſes had inſtituted. Many prophets before him had wrought miracles, but the utmoſt they had dared to do on the authority of them, was to call back the tranſgreſſing ſons of Iſrael to a more exact obedience to the Moſaical inſtitutions; but Jeſus, having eſtabliſhed by miracles his divine authority, then annulled the laws of Moſes; declaring that thoſe inſtitutions were only typical of that ſuperior diſpenſation which he came to introduce, appealing to Moſes and the prophets as evidence for him. Surely then, O king Agrippa, if thou believeſt the prophet Moſes, thou muſt alſo believe in Jeſus of Nazareth, for he propheſied of him.

Hearken to the voice of David: looking beyond the days in which he lived, like one having authority, he makes the Iſraelites in their moſt ſolemn ſervices of praiſe demand, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth ſet themſelves, and their rulers take counſel together againſt the Lord, and againſt his Meſſiah." How exactly did the prophet deſcribe the unnatural union of wicked men to condemn our bleſſed Lord! "For of a truth againſt the holy Jeſus, the Meſſiah, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the gentiles and the people of Iſrael, were gathered together, to do whatever thy hand and thy counſel, O Jehovah, determined before to be done." This pſalm contains a ſtriking deſcription of the firſt grand oppoſition made to the perſon, kingdom, and government of Jeſus the Meſſiah, and the conſequences that ſhould follow. "He that ſitteth in the heavens ſhall laugh; the Lord ſhall have them in deriſion: then ſhall he ſpeak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his ſore diſpleaſure."

However powerful the combination might appear to man---however well calculated to anſwer the deſtructive intentions of earth and hell---in the eyes of Jehovah they were ridiculous; he beheld their mad attempts with ſcorn; he fruſtrated the evil of their intentions, and forced them to become the willing inſtruments of accompliſhing all that he before determined ſhould come to paſs. Let the heathen boaſt of their Jove and fate. Fate is the ſovereign will of our God, and all the powers of hell, and earth, and heaven, leagued together, ſhall not fruſtrate it. As well might the feeble ſons of mortality attempt to pluck the ſolar orb from its ſphere, or caſt the ſhadow

of death over its glorious diſplay of illuminated nature, as to attempt to oppoſe and bring to nought the decrees of infinite and incontroulable power. He whoſe almighty fiat called all creation into exiſtence, has pronounced the decree, " Thou art my ſon, this day have I begotten thee. Demand of me, and I will give the heathen, thine inheritance; and the uttermoſt parts of the earth thy poſſeſſion." Yes, O King Agrippa, I know that thou art acquainted with theſe prophecies: they are completely fulfilled in Jeſus of Nazareth; and he hath demanded of the Father that he will accompliſh his promiſe, and cauſe " the world to know that he ſent him" to ſubdue and rule the nations. Be wiſe, now, therefore, O ye kings! be inſtructed, O ye judges of the earth! Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling: kiſs the ſon, leſt he be angry, and ye periſh from the way. When his wrath is kindled but a little, bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him."

The book of Pſalms, in the plaineſt and moſt explicit manner, points out the particulars of the death of our bleſſed Lord. " I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midſt of my bowels; my ſtrength is dried up like a potſherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws: and thou haſt brought me into the duſt of death. For dogs have compaſſed me; the aſſembly of the wicked have encloſed me; they pierced my hands and my feet; they may tell all my bones; they look and ſtare upon me; they part my garments among them, and caſts lots for my veſture."

It is truly aſtoniſhing, that any one can believe the prophecies, and not ſee them, in the moſt wonderful manner, accompliſhed in the perſon of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. David could not ſpeak theſe things of himſelf; his hands and feet never were pierced; the weight of his body, ſupported by his wounded members, forced not his bones from their ſockets; through the agonizing torments of a lingering, cruel death, his heart melted not like wax within him; nor through the fierceneſs of extreme pain was his mouth parched up; neither did the hell hounds of war and rapine ſurround him, and caſt lots for his garments. David could not deſcribe either his own ſufferings or the ſufferings of a man, dying by the extremity of pain upon the croſs. In thoſe days ſuch a death was not known; it became the ſons of ſcience and politeneſs to invent ſuch an infernal way of making the innocent and the uncondemned paſs from the cares and anxieties of this life to the ſacred joys of a better. For this mode of dying was unknown, till the mad ambitious Alexander, falſely called the Great, invented

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it as a punishment on the Tyrians, for daring to defend themselves against his insolence and rapacity. But all the particulars of this cruel death met in Jesus the beloved, the son of David. He was poured out like water; when from the extreme bitterness of his soul, agonizing in the garden, the sweat poured down him, in large drops, like blood from a lacerated vessel; when hung upon the cross, his strained members must have been all disjointed. Alas! who can tell at that awful time the pain he must have endured; a body that contained a soul like his, must have been made of delicate texture; liable through the whole of his pilgrimage to the softest feelings of humanity; what tortures must it then have felt! The soul in full possession of every sense, whilst the whole frame was torn and strained to the most excruciating torture; his heart, surely, must have melted within his severed body, like wax before the scorching fire; whilst his whole strength, dried up by the excess of anguish, felt that most unbearable of pains, the extreme of debility from an unnerved frame; whilst the moistening juices, which the God of nature has kindly provided, to lubricate the parts in action, were dried up, and caused the unmoistened tongue to cleave to the roof of the parched jaws.

Every thing prophesied concerning the death of our blessed Lord took place, even to the minutest tittle. For instance, who would not have expected, from what happens at every execution, that the surrounding multitude would have melted into pity, at the tortures of the awful death he endured! Had he been a murderer, they doubtless would have felt for his sufferings. We do not find that they made any exultations, over the two dying thieves, that were crucified with him; they had been robbers, and perhaps worse, yet they were not insulted with their crimes: no triumphant exclamations added aggravated horrors to their expiring thoughts: but Jesus, the friend of the fatherless, the comforter of the widow; he, who had been eyes to the blind, a tongue to the dumb, and limbs to the maimed; he, whose whole life was one continual scene of benevolence; even he, when unjustly and illegally put to death, had his dying moments insulted with, "He saved others, cannot he save himself? If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross." These were, indeed, the beasts of the people; fierce, and strong as the bulls of Basan; gaping upon him with their mouths like ravening and roaring lions.

Again, who would have thought that the psalm should be accomplished, which says, "They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

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One could not have ſuppoſed, that any in a civilized nation could have been ſo cruel; but ſo they were. For it is written, "And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall; and when he had taſted thereof he would not drink."

The book of the Pſalms, is the only book that ſpeaks of his reſurrection from the dead. "Thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy one to ſee corruption." Though but once expreſſed, yet how exactly was it accompliſhed; as Peter, reaſoning upon this paſſage, has ſhewn, that the patriarch David could not poſſibly ſpeak of himſelf, for he was dead and buried, and his ſepulchre, even at that time, was amongſt them. "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had ſworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the fleſh, he would raiſe up the Meſſiah, to ſit upon his throne; he, ſeeing this, ſpake before-hand of the reſurrection of Chriſt, that his ſoul was not left in hell, neither did his fleſh ſee corruption." Glory be to God for the gift of his prophetic word. It is a ſure and abundant teſtimony to the doctrines of Chriſtianity, of which there is not any more important than the reſurrection of Chriſt; and therefore, there is no hiſtorical fact whatſoever that has ſuch undeniable evidence of its truth. There is recorded no leſs than eleven different appearances of Chriſt after his reſurrection from the dead; one of which was to five hundred brethren; all of whom appear to have been, in a general way, unbelieving of it, until demonſtrated to their ſenſes that it was ſo; and then ſo convinced were they that Jeſus had ariſen from the dead, that it became within them a conſtant ſpring of action, calling forth all the powers of their mind and body in its defence. This made them to march as in triumph to the croſs, the ſword, or the ſtake, proud to ſeal their teſtimony with their blood.

As we appeal to prophecy that the Meſſiah was to die, and then riſe from the dead, ſo likewiſe to the ſacred writings muſt we appeal to prove that he ought to aſcend up on high. Speaking of things that were to be, as though they had been paſt, the Pſalmiſt ſhouts exultingly, "Thou haſt aſcended up on high, thou haſt led captivity captive, thou haſt received gifts for men, yea, the rebellious alſo, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Again, it is ſpoken of in a moſt triumphant ſong, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates! and be ye lift up, ye everlaſting doors, and the king of glory ſhall come in. Who is this king of glory? The Lord ſtrong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift

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up your heads, O ye gates! even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in. Who is this king of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory." With what dignity does Jesus, the glorified king, demand the gates of heaven to be opened for his admission. If the prophetic description is so grand, how beyond expression glorious must it have been, to have seen the sovereign of all nature, demand admission into these blessed mansions of unclouded day. I think I speak but according to the mind of God, when I apply the 47th Psalm to this grand event. "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our king, sing praises: for God is the king of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding." If such glorious songs of exultation, resounded through the etherial courts when Jesus ascended up on high, how much more glorious will be the descent of the son of God, when attended by angelic miriads, and the first-born sons of God: he shall leave the courts of Jehovah, and descend to that mountain from which he ascended, there to claim the kingdom for his own, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.

The Psalmist has taken a look into the etherial courts, in the cxth Psalm, and beheld the welcome reception that the Messiah, the son of David, should receive on his return from his state of debasement and trial here below: "Jehovah said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Jehovah shall send the rod of thy strength out of Sion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth. Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Jehovah, at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath; he shall judge among the heathen; he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries; he shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up his head." How exactly does this psalm coincide with the apostle's language concerning the present residence of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool;" who, saith the apostles, "the heavens must retain, until the times of the restitution of all things." Yes, he shall sit upon the throne of his father, in glory; until that long expected period, when surrounded with immortal honors, he shall come cloathed in power to rule over the earth,

earth, and bow the nations beneath his ſceptre. In this glorious day of his power, his people, who for ſo many ages have hated his name, ſhall become his willing ſubjects. Like the drops of dew upon the herbage, ſhall be the number of his ſubjects, when a nation ſhall be born unto him in a day--- when Jeſus, the ſaviour, cometh as the ſeed of David, to claim his paternal inheritance, and as the firſt born of God to be the great High Prieſt of the human race; then ſhall Jehovah judge among the nations; yea, he ſhall ariſe in awful vengeance, and ſweep the miriads of Gog and Magog from the land; he ſhall fill the valley of the ſon of Hinnom with the dead bodies; he will go on conquering, and to conquer, bruiſing the head and ruler of the nations beneath his feet; he will drink continually by the way, of the fountain of life-giving water, therefore ſhall he lift up his head; yea, he ſhall exalt himſelf glorioufly, for Jehovah will put all his enemies beneath his feet.

It is on account of the many great changes that will take place in the ſtate of the world, and its inhabitants, at the ſecond coming of Chriſt, with regard to the holineſs and happineſs of the one, and the beauty of the other, that the prophets, and particularly in the Pſalms, with ſuch holy joy, anticipate the wonders of the Meſſiah's reign. "Make a joyful noiſe unto Jehovah, all ye lands, ſerve Jehovah with gladneſs, come before his preſence with ſinging. Know ye that Jehovah is God, he hath made us, and not we ourſelves; we are his people, and the ſheep of his paſture. Enter into his gates with thankſgiving, his courts with praiſe; be thankful and bleſs his name. For Jehovah is good, his mercy is everlaſting, and his truth is to all generations." Hence it is, that in this triumphant ſong, they look forward to that ſacred day, ſhouting aloud, "O ſing unto Jehovah a new ſong, for he hath done marvellous things; his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory. Jehovah hath made known his ſalvation; his righteouſneſs hath he openly ſhewed in the ſight of the heathen; he hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward Iſrael. All the ends of the earth have ſeen the ſalvation of our God. Make a joyful noiſe unto Jehovah, all the earth: make a loud noiſe, and rejoice, and ſing praiſe." Theſe glorious exultations are not to be wondered at, when we conſider the preſent ſtate of the world; individuals living for themſelves; oppreſſion through all ranks of mankind directing their actions, whilſt hypocriſy guides and covers them with a veil of love. Examine the preſent ſtate of mankind, and aſk, where is the village in the world, where

where the happineſs and comfort of the whole is the utmoſt wiſh of each individual? Say, what is man by birth but the children of one parent; yet, what is man really, but the oppreſſor, and the oppreſſed? He that is this day trod upon as dirt, exerts every power of his mind, that to-morrow he may trample others beneath his feet. This ought not to be; to be an inſtrument of univerſal happineſs, is truly the birthright of every man; and when Jeſus the Saviour cometh to rule the earth in righteouſneſs, men will lay claim to this grand and univerſal prerogative; the poſſeſſion thereof ſhall ſpread peace, joy, and plenty throughout nature's wide domain. Jeſus the conqueror comes, not to drag his conquered vaſſals at his chariot wheels; not to beſtilize the ſons of men; but he cometh to deſtroy oppreſſion, to give univerſal peace, to lay a foundation for the recovery of his fallen creatures, and to finally and fully reſtore to happineſs and duty, the perverted works of God. All hail! thou Son of the Higheſt; ſoon mayeſt thou appear, and commence the promiſed period of univerſal and unending bliſs.

Influenced by the prophetic ſpirit, the prophets often ſpeak of the things that were to be as though they were. Thus Iſaiah, ſpeaking of the birth of the Meſſiah, ſays, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a ſon is given; and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulder; and his name ſhall be called, Wonderful, Counſellor, the Mighty God, the Everlaſting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increaſe of his government, and peace, there ſhall be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to eſtabliſh it with judgment and with juſtice, from henceforth even for ever; the zeal of the Lord of Hoſts will perform this." Again, he ſpeaks of Chriſt, "Behold a virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his name Emmanuel." The ſacred hiſtorians record theſe prophecies as fulfilled in the perſon of our bleſſed Lord. After having related the miraculous conception of the bleſſed virgin, he makes this obſervation, "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken of the Lord, by the prophet, ſaying, Behold a virgin ſhall be with child, and ſhall bring forth a ſon, and they ſhall call his name, Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us." Again, Iſaiah ſpeaks of the miracles that he ſhall perform, as a proof of his Meſſiahſhip. "Behold my ſervant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my ſoul delighteth; I have put my ſpirit upon him; he ſhall bring forth judgement unto the gentiles; he ſhall not cry, nor lift up, nor cauſe his

voice to be heard in the ſtreet. A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, and the ſmoking flax ſhall he not quench; he ſhall bring forth judgment unto truth; he ſhall not fail, nor be diſcouraged, till he have ſet judgment in the earth, and the iſles ſhall wait for his law. Thus ſaith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and ſtretched them out; he that ſpread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and ſpirit to them that walk therein, I, the Lord, have called thee in righteouſneſs, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant for the people, for a light of the gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring the priſoners from the priſon, and them that ſit in darkneſs out of the priſon houſe." Many other paſſages of the prophecies ſpeak of the temper, the conduct, and the deeds of the Meſſiah who was to come. In conformity to theſe prophecies, when John ſent his diſciples to aſk him, "Art thou he that was to come, or are we to look for another?" In that very hour he gave them an anſwer, not in word, but by facts; he accompliſhed the prophecies. In that ſame hour "he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil ſpirits, and unto many that were blind he gave ſight. Then Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things you have ſeen and heard, how that the blind ſee, the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed, to the poor the goſpel is preached, and bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me." Thus we find the ſacred oracles, in whatſoever they foretell, leave no doubt upon the mind concerning its accompliſhment, becauſe all their proofs are appeals to the underſtanding of man; they demand our faith according to the ſtrength of their evidence.

Another character is by Iſaiah applied to our Lord; a character which, like all the other marks of the Meſſiah, can only be ſaid properly to belong to him. "As many were aſtoniſhed at thee, (his viſage was ſo marred more than any man, and his form more than the ſons of men,) ſo ſhall he ſprinkle many nations; the kings ſhall ſhut their mouths at him, for that which had not been told them ſhall they ſee, and that which they had not heard ſhall they conſider." What a contraſt is here between the ſuffering and the glorified ſtate of the Meſſiah. In none doth theſe characters meet, but in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; he was deſpiſed and abhorred by the nation, the beauty of his countenance was marred by the ſtreaming blood iſſuing from his thorn bepierced temples, and his form (by the anguiſh of his ſoul, as peculiarly the man of ſorrow, added to the hor-

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ror of his ſufferings) was more diſfigured than the ſons of men." But ſince his aſcenſion how has he ſprinkled many nations! He has rained down upon them ſhowers of heavenly truth; and when he cometh to reign on this earth, then ſhall the whole multitude of the nations be watered by him; then ſhall they indeed live, and the kings of the earth ſhall bring their tributes and lay at his feet, whilſt they themſelves ſtand liſtening to catch truth and wiſdom as it flows from his mouth. Yea, they ſhall behold ſuch glory as they could not have conceived could poſſibly have been, and ſuch heights and depths of knowledge as the never before heard of ſhall they then meditate upon.

It is an impoſſibility to read the prophecies with attention, without beholding Jeſus of Nazareth, as repreſented in the goſpel, in the moſt prominent features. The whole of the liiid. chap. of Iſaiah, contains ſuch a deſcription of the ſufferings of our Lord, and his mode of burial, that was there not demonſtrative evidence of its exiſtence for centuries before the facts happened, we ſhould be almoſt tempted to think an eye-witneſs of the tranſactions had recorded them. "He was led like a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo opened he not his mouth. He was taken from priſon, and from judgement, and who ſhall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſtricken; and he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich was his tomb." Say, do you believe the prophets? What a number of little particulars are here. The Meſſiah, the king of Iſrael, ſhall ſtand like a vile malefactor at the bar of judgement, and there be ſilent amidſt all the accuſations that ſhould be brought againſt him; that he, the hope of Iſrael, the deſire of nations, unprotected, and unreſiſting, ſhould be brought forth like a lamb from the flock, to be offered up in ſacrifice; that he ſhould die an infamous death, and yet have an honourable burial, were things inconſiſtent and incredible. Say, doſt thou believe the prophets? Then, canſt thou read of the death of Jeſus, and not believe upon him?

Zechariah, ſpeaking of the entire diſſolution of the covenant which God had made with the children of Iſrael as a nation, mentions one circumſtance that ſhould at that time take place. "And I ſaid unto them, if ye think good give me my price, and if not, forbear; ſo they weighed for my price thirty pieces of ſilver. And the Lord ſaid unto me, caſt it unto the potter, a goodly price, that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of ſilver, and caſt them to the potter, in

the houſe of the Lord." How circumſtantially exact did Judas fulfil this prophecy. Surely this fact could not have been unknown to King Agrippa; Paul, therefore, might with great propriety of application ſay unto him, Believeſt thou the prophets?

Equally exact, Micah declares the place of the Meſſiah's birth. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thouſands of Judah, out of thee ſhall he come forth unto me, to be a ruler in Iſrael, whoſe goings forth have been from old, from everlaſting." This prophecy, though a ſingular one, concerning the birth-place of the Meſſiah, yet was literally accompliſhed, although to fulfil it the whole Roman empire was ſet in motion. When the virgin conceived, ſhe was about eighty miles diſtant from Bethlehem. Auguſtus, the greateſt of the Roman Emperors, was, on his part, unintentionally made the inſtrument of its fulfilment; he decreed the whole of the empire ſhould be taxed. Three things, as far as regards our Lord, are very remarkable in this taxation. 1. As it accompliſhed the prophecy, by cauſing Joſeph and Mary to journey to Bethlehem, the place of their family reſidence. 2. It proves that Joſeph and Mary, being of the family of David, were heirs of David; for the taxation was upon landed property. The inheritance of the family of David was at Bethlehem; had they been younger branches they would have had no inheritance to be taxed; but being the heirs of that family, it was neceſſary, for the preſervation of the family poſſeſſion, that they ſhould perſonally appear to be enrolled. 3. It preciſely fixes the period when our Saviour came to take away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf when Auguſtus was Emperor of Rome, and Cyrenius Governor of Syria. By this means alſo the records of the heathen empire became the records of the Chriſtian faith. Truly, the earth belongeth unto Jehovah, and he ruleth all things according to the counſels of his own will. Say, O infidel! wilt thou not believe the prophets? Such an extraordinary coincidence of circumſtances could not be the work of chance, but is a wonderful manifeſtation of the almighty over-ruling power of God.

Many things there are, beſides the doctrines of the croſs, that are treated of by the prophets. By the prophetical writings we do more than barely defend Chriſtianity from the attacks of infidelity; for to defend Chriſtianity is a ſlight thing; let the infidel bring all his boaſted artillery of reaſon, let him make ſtrong his battery, let him mount his cannon, let him pour in his heavieſt fire, ſtill firm and unſhaken ſtand its bulwarks, even

even though defended by a weak believer, indifferently well acquainted with divine revelation. Yea, more, whilſt diſcourſing on the prophecies relating to other matters, we may turn aſſailants, and drive the reaſoning deiſt from all his ſtrong holds. For inſtance, the mode of life of the Arabians, and their preſervation, as a people diſtinct from all others, cannot be accounted for by natural cauſes. A weak, defenceleſs people, contemptible in their perſons and arms, have been attacked by well diſciplined armies, commanded by the greateſt conquerors, and yet they have never been conquered; but weak, and diſunited as they are, yet they have always lived by pillage, and at times have conquered the fineſt parts, and the moſt populous of the inhabited globe. Reaſon will, in vain, be unable to account for this; we cannot unravel the myſteries thereof; every other nation has its riſing, its meridian, and its ſetting ſun; but this nation, though driven back oft times to its ancient boundaries, always have thoſe boundaries unbroken. Invincible when ſurrounded by conquerors; free amidſt nations of ſlaves; freebooters and robbers amongſt the civilized nations of the globe: revelation unfolds the myſtery. It is there we find that it is Jehovah, who giveth bounds to the nations, that hath given Arabia to the deſcendants of Iſhmael, and declared that he ſhould be a wild man, his hand againſt every man, and every man's hand againſt him, and that he ſhould dwell in the preſence of all his brethren. Nothing but infinite foreſight could have foretold, and infinite power could have ſo ordered circumſtances, that a man's whole poſterity ſhould thus, for many ages, be acting againſt every man, and every man againſt them, and yet ſhould be preſerved unconquerable amidſt ſurrounding enemies. Yet this is the caſe with the whole of that nation, and they give this as a reaſon for it, that their father Iſhmael gave them liberty to attack, enſlave, and pillage every man, but by divine authority, promiſed them, that they ſhould never be enſlaved.

In like manner the Lord by Moſes threatens the Iſraelites in caſe of diſobedience, that he will "ſcatter them amongſt all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou ſhalt ſerve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and ſtone; and amongſt theſe nations thou ſhalt have no eaſe, neither ſhall the ſole of thy foot have reſt; but the Lord ſhall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and ſorrow of mind." And in like manner the other prophets ſpeak of this people; and behold, ye infidels, at this day the accompliſhment of it. They have

have rejected the prophet like unto Moſes, and for it they are cut off from being the people of God; and yet, in the midſt of all, they dwell alone, a nation, a deſpiſed nation, in the midſt of the nations. Where are the Midianites, the Moabites, the Iſhmaelites, and many other nations, the ancient enemies of the Jews? They are cut off from amidſt the nations, even their names are almoſt loſt from the records of the earth; but this poor humbled people ſtill remain, and will continue ſo to do, a diſtinct people, till their elder brother, the abhorred of the nation, till he ſhall come again the ſecond time, without ſin, unto their ſalvation.

The prophets propheſied of the Meſſiah, even Jeſus of Nazareth, and the truth of their prophecies have been eſtabliſhed by the fulfilment of their denunciations againſt ſuch of the nations and cities as were cruel and oppreſſive to the children of Iſrael. Where is Nineveh, the mighty, containing ſuch a number of inhabitants? her name is periſhed from the face of the earth. Where is Babylon the lofty, the queen of cities, and the miſtreſs of the nations? her ſtrength is decayed, her beauty is gone, the veſtiges of her former foundations are buried beneath the floods, and the beauty of the fertile plains which ſurrounded her have loſt their ancient glory, and are almoſt pathleſs as the ſandy deſert. Where is Tyre, the merchant of the nations, the ruler of the mighty waters, ſhe, whoſe ſnowy plumage winged her a path over the ſtormy deep? Alas! ſhe is gone, her bulwarks lay plunged beneath thoſe ſeas which they formerly governed, her lofty palaces are fallen, and the ſolid rock is alone left, a humble monument of her former ſituation and her preſent ruin. Should any one, paſſing through this populous town, ſurvey the numerous mighty fabrics which exalt their heads unto the heavens, whilſt their ſolid foundations, like nature's primæval rocks, are buried deep into the bowels of the earth—ſhould ſuch a one, admiring its vaſt extent, its opulence, and magnificence, be told by ſome half-ſtarved, contemptible looking ſervant of the living God, "Thus, ſaith the Lord, Behold, I am againſt thee, O! deſtroying London, who deſtroyeth all the earth, and I will ſtretch out my hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain, and they ſhall not take of thee a ſtone for a corner, nor a ſtone for a foundation, but thou ſhalt be deſolate for ever, ſaith the Lord;" Who would think it credible? the prophet of the Lord would be conſidered as a madman, or puniſhed as a vagabond! his miſſion would be rejected, and conſidered as impoſſible; yet thus did God,

God, by the mouth of Jeremiah, threaten Babylon, the glory of the world, and the pride and wonder of the whole earth. And it is come to paſs; her broad walls, with the hundred ſtrong towers upon them, her beautiful hanging gardens, her glorious palaces, and all her former beauties, are buried beneath the ſtagnate waters of the Euphrates; her former defence and ornament is her preſent ruin: it is now the habitation of venomous reptiles, and the dread of mankind. And as it was with Babylon ſo it was with Tyre, Nineveh, &c. the word of Jehovah hath been long accompliſhed, and they exhibit to mankind the hand of Jehovah fully accompliſhing whatſoever he threatens.

"Judgment on leaden wings may ſlowly riſe,
But ſpreadeth ſure deſtruction as ſhe flies;
Eternal ruin marks her direful road,
Dire trophies of a ſin avenging God."

Let me here pauſe—Let me put to you the queſtion that Paul of Tarſus, put to King Agrippa.—Believeſt thou the prophets? Thou beholdeſt what God hath done in the days that are paſt? His arm is not ſhortened; that which he hath declared he will perform ſhall ſurely come to paſs. The preſent is an eventful period; ſince the ſeventh trumpet hath began to ſound, what aſtoniſhing events have began to take place. It was as it were but yeſterday, when we ourſelves would not have given credit to them. Overturning! overturning! overturning! is now the language of ſcripture. War, famine, and peſtilence, are the weapons of his hand; it is with theſe he puniſheth the inhabitants of the earth; it is with theſe he teacheth mankind to reflect upon the end of their exiſtence, and bringeth them to the acknowledgement of himſelf; it is with theſe that he is now levelling the pride, the ſelf-will, and the ambition of mankind. Theſe are the mighty meſſengers who go before crying, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make a ſtrait path for our God. Jeſus, the mighty conqueror comes; I hear the rolling of his warlike car, and mark the footſteps of his horſes ſteeped in blood. How awful will be their fate who oppoſe him. Like water ſhall their blood be poured out, and the mountain of their fleſh ſhall be ſpread like dung upon the face of the earth. "Therefore, wait ye upon me, ſaith the Lord, until the day that I riſe up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may aſſemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them my indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth ſhall be devoured with the fire of my jealouſy." Time will not permit an enlargement upon this ſubject,

subject; the melancholy scene is began; would ye escape the awful vengeance, flee ye to the chamber of his love; hide yourselves beneath the shadow of his wings, until the overwhelming tempest is past; for he alone is a sanctuary from the storm, and a hiding place from the tempest.

But the prophecies leave us not here amidst the horrors of darkness and the shadows of death, but they, in many places, positively declare, that Jesus will come, and all his saints shall come with him; faith now realizes the approaching scene, and hails his presence, whilst every beating thought cries out, Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly! Come, thou Almighty Saviour, rule over the earth from sea to sea, and from shore to shore! Oh! come, and sway over all thy sceptre of peace.

Some of you may ask, Are you not afraid of preaching in this manner? Are you not afraid of giving offence unto the governing powers? No, indeed, not I; I would not give offence to any man, or any sort of men; but I would to God that all the ruling powers were here now that they might hear that Jesus, the Messiah, will soon come in person to claim the kingdoms for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; and that till he comes, however vain men may attempt it, there will not be any universal monarchy take place. His kingdom is universal, and his alone; and upon the throne of Israel, not by a spiritual, but by an earthly reign, will he establish it, and it shall continue unshaken for a thousand years. Now, what is there in all this ought to give umbrage to the kings and princes of the earth? I call not on them to resign their sceptres but to sway them in righteousness, that when he cometh they may hold them as fiefs of his will, and do homage to him as their supreme Lord. For when he cometh, they shall either rejoice to own his supreme authority, or they shall perish before him. For "he shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish, and of the isles, shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts; yea, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him." In that day "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it; and many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and

and the word of Jehovah from Jeruſalem. And he ſhall judge among the nations, and he ſhall rebuke many peoples: and they ſhall beat their ſwords into plough ſhares and their ſpears into pruning hooks; nation ſhall not lift up ſword againſt nation, neither ſhall they learn war any more." Happy period this! my ſoul ardently longeth to behold it. I dare not condemn their motives who ſpiritualize theſe and multitudes of ſimilar and equally glorious paſſages; but I pity their weakneſs; they know not where ſuch conduct leadeth them, whilſt it unintentionally cauſeth them to treat with contempt the word of the living God.

"Believeſt thou the prophets?" Under the preſent awful ſtate of things what joy what conſolation will they afford!----- Time, with rapid wings, is, by dreadful judgments, uſhering in the grand millenial reign of Jeſus: then will the myſterious ſcene of providence be unravelled, and all the wonders of divine love be laid open unto men. Tranſporting thought! what amazing intricacies will then be laid open, when providence and prophecy are fully known.

Prophecy, like the night and day, from infancy to manhood, leads us on ſtep by ſtep, from light to darkneſs, and then from darkneſs to light, unto the grand concluding period, which ſome of you are diſtinguiſhed by the name of Univerſaliſts for believing. The prophecies declare, that the head of the ſerpent muſt be bruiſed---that God muſt be all in all; rebellion therefore muſt be baniſhed from the univerſe---the foes of Jeſus muſt become his footſtool---the curſe muſt be no more---tears muſt be wiped from every eye---all muſt be drawn unto Jeſus---all muſt be made new: for Jehovah hath ſworn by himſelf, the righteous word is gone out of his mouth, and ſhall not return, that unto him every knee ſhall bow, and every tongue ſhall ſwear, ſurely each ſhall ſay, In Jehovah have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength. To him ſhall they come, and all that are incenſed againſt him ſhall be aſhamed; for at the name of Jeſus the Reſtorer every knee ſhall bow, of thoſe in heaven, of thoſe in earth, and of thoſe under the earth, and every tongue ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. For it pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell; and having made peace through the blood of the croſs, by him to reconcile all things to himſelf; by him, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. Yes, bleſſed be the name of God our univerſal parent, Jeſus the Reſtorer hath given himſelf a ranſom for all, and this is the proper ſeaſon to bear teſtimony to it.

O Christian, believest thou the prophets? I know thou dost. What sources of consolation, of holy peace, and joy, and hope, do they afford thee! In vain shall infidelity raise against thee its hydra head, boldly upon the sure word of prophecy shalt thou attack the poisonous serpent, and lay him dead beneath thy feet.

Infidelity is in part to be attributed to the imperfect mode in which Christianity has been preached. It has either been spiritualized into tatters, or it has been reasoned out of its soul and energy. The partial truth, and not the whole truth, has been spoken---The doctrines taught as the doctrines of the Scripture represent the Deity as imperfect in wisdom, love, and power. Surely that Almighty Being who formed his creature man, formed him for happiness; yet, on whatsoever scheme as hath hitherto been taught you consider it, you make him to intend, really or impotently, endless misery to the greatest part of the workmanship of his hands. But blessed be the great Former of all, he hath, by his holy apostles and prophets, taught us better things: he hath exhibited the beauty of his character in the all-subduing perfection of divine love. In the gladdening prospect infidelity loses its hold upon us, Scripture becomes harmonized, and worthy to be the revelation of God. Standing on this foundation, our souls can rise aloft above the cloudy scenes of a dark providence, and stand unshaken amidst a war of elements, a crash of nations, and the discordant clang of arms. Believest thou the prophets, O Christian? then let an holy obedience manifest thy faith---so shalt thou find peace and joy and righteousness here, and glory hereafter. AMEN.

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